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BETWEEN EARTH AND SKY

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BETWEEN EARTH AND SKY

by

KONRAD BERCOVICI

with an introduction by

A. E. COPPARD



LONDON

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To
MY BROTHER JOSEF
WHO IS MORE THAN
BROTHER TO ME

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Introduction

KONRAD BERCOVICI, the author of these striking stories, was born in the Dobrudja province of Roumania in 1882. His education begun there, was continued in the streets of Paris, and completed in many other great cities and places of the world, from Panama and the peak in Darien even unto the city of Damascus. This Roumanian wears the favours of New York, Havana, Paris, Bucharest, Athens, Marseilles, all as so many posies in his buttonhole; his adventurous youth has given him a cosmopolitan range of material which he transmutes with an authentic air, and his readers will perceive that he can write English far better than most natives. Speaking generally, it is when his mind roves back to the plains of home, lying between the Dobrudja and the Black Sea, that his literary talent finds its happiest responses, for there lies—or once lay—a country in which men seem to work for themselves alone or for no other master except perhaps their tribe; a world of Balkan shepherds, gipsies, Tartars and Tcherkeszes, an entirely romantic group of people with instinctive responses,

primitive traditions, and most picturesque turns of speech. At least, that much can be said of the men and almost as much of the dogs of which the author writes so fondly, though the young women of these races seem oddly submissive to parental dictates!

'All life,' said Walter Pater, 'is a wandering to find home,' and Konrad Bercovici has the soul of a wanderer, just as all his creations have. That home is the lifelong goal of the artist, and Bercovici, who now lives in New York, seems to have found it by a queer proxy, as if he had carried with him into the American tumult a magical telescope that could focus best at that extreme remove upon the calm grandeur of Dobrudjan scenes and peoples; a glass that pierces not only through space, but backwards through time, to secure a vision bedewed with the fabulous sweet sense of the past, heroic youth and stoical old age.

It is not this gift alone that is revealed in the work of Bercovici, for although he is a 'romantic' he has a picturesque and observant eye, with a brush full of colour to paint whatever he sees; this passage about Damascus teems with fine suggestions:

"The small anvils, the steel of which has been half eaten away by the blasts of sand that have passed over them, spiked six feet underground, upon which twenty generations

of sword-makers have hammered the thin, cold steel into famous blue blades, are still glistening in front of the bazaars. There is an old and a new minaret near the gate. Both towers are painted green. The new one is over a thousand years old.'

How nonchalantly but how pregnantly that last sentence swings! His atmosphere is engendered with the casual verity of a master; we shiver in the air of his frozen rivers, bask in his sunshine, and are mournfully chill under his autumn moons. The diversity of scenes is well matched by the diversity of characters he projects for them; these have the common likeness of men and women, but their significant differences remain in the memory like coloured stars quietly twinkling in a tender sky. Of moral, creed, or philosophy, there is blessedly not a scrap, though his folk are wise with the wisdom of unconfined things; these stories are told merely for the stories' sake, and thus they are not of the new kind but of the oldest and best kind. If his heroes are inspired by any general principle or motive, it is mainly that of personal courage, just as Conrad's heroes are dominated often by a sublime devotion to insane ideas of duty; and this is pressed on occasion to fatal or quixotic issues, since failures may bring disaster upon the tribe, or disgrace shatter its feudal perfection, or compromise twine a net to catch the feet of the free. That gesture of Naye

burning down his much-cherished home at the end of *The Stranger* is Homeric in its mute significance.

By profession the author is, or once was, an organist. When asked what he liked most in the world he replied, 'People, horses, gardens.' He might have added gipsies to these, as a sub-section to people, let us say, for his gipsies are not strictly people any more than Borrow's are – they are Titans. Bercovici loves a gipsy and he loves, too, a catastrophe. Enter a gipsy, and a catastrophe incontinently follows. But these gipsies are as remote as pastoral Abraham from the bedraggled vagrants of our own country fairs; they are men of beauty, substance and pride, full of courage, generosity and wisdom, dancers, lovers, racers, fighters, players of the fiddle, and quite certainly the close kindred of Jasper Petulengro. The flavour of their lives is as the flavour of folk tales, half poetry, half legend – and wholly true! From them Bercovici has caught the rich tones of a time that has, no doubt, long since faded, tones that recall by some queer but pleasant misdirection, the rural and innocent poetry of Blake, and aquatints by Gainsborough, agreeably musty.

A. E. COPPARD.

Muzio

And of love I have this to say: that it is both bee and flower. It gives and takes the nectar that brews into honey. Woe to the one who separates the giver from the taker. Woe to the one who would replace either bee or flower. Upon his head all the sorrows of the world will heap. The nectar will turn into gall. For, great as is the sin of giving kisses to one thou dost not love, as great and greater is the sin of accepting kisses from one not loving thee.

'And if a man come to thee and tell thee "I have never loved," turn thy face away from him, and bathe thyself thrice before facing the woman thou lovest, lest your breath pollute her.

'And if a woman saith, "I have never loved," beware of her. For they who have never loved are like monsters who, having shut themselves away from the sun, have grown sharp claws where their eyes should have been. But if a man, bedraggled, haggard, leprous even, come to thee and saith: "Lo, I have loved too well," wash his feet, spread thy coat underneath him. If thy tent be too small to share, go thyself into the cold, and let him get such comfort as he can find; warm thyself at the thought of his warmth.

'And another thing I will tell thee. This to answer those who say "I have loved only once, and can never love again." That if a heart be full of love, it will when its time comes, like the flower sucked dry the

morning before, overflow again with nectar. And like the bee that has emptied itself, it will again fill itself with the honey of love . . . this, or the flower turns into gall and the bee into a spider. I have spoken.'

THEY called her Muzio. Muzio was a dancer in one of the saloons of Calle Sante Ignatio of Havana. The place, 'El Cielo,' pretentiously furnished, with gaudily painted walls, is a saloon in one of the streets that lead to the wharf. 'El Cielo' is far better known on sea than on land, for it is the rendezvous of sailors. And toilers of the sea, whether on the Caribbean or Chinese seas, whether dumping coal brought from Newcastle or Trieste, unloading wool from Australia, on the Caspian or the Black Sea, on the Atlantic or the Sea of Marmora, heaving to and fro, are singing the melody last heard from Muzio's lips; a year or two or three years before. And among the sailors no one ever asked, 'When were you last at Havana?' but 'When did you see Muzio last?'

Muzio! A tall, thin, brown-fleshed woman. Heavily pencilled eyebrows, accentuated heavy lids over large brown eyes. A long straight nose beginning from a low forehead. Heavy lips, enthroning a round delicate chin, the lines of which seemed to lose themselves in the nervous fine surface-veined throat. Her hands were cov-

ered with cheap jewellery of all kinds and colours. The fingers were literally gloved with rings, rings of imitation silver and gold, pewter and brass. Glass blood-red rubies on one finger, artificial topazes on the other. Crystal chips for diamonds, some as large as a door-knob, and opals and turquoises by the hundreds. A wealth of false jewels covered her wrists in the form of bracelets, and her neck in the form of necklaces. All these were gifts from her sailormen friends – things brought to her from the remotest corners of the world by men whose hearts she had gladdened; who had spent their few hours of leave with her before embarking again on the boat for the other end of the world, or that lay them to sleep at the bottom of the sea – food for oysters from the shells of which ten thousand years hence more genuine pearls would come to adorn perhaps less true and less noble women than Muzio had been. For Muzio's soul was a true soul.

The men who brought her these baubles loved her. She held the love of all of them, gave them of her love – oh, how different from that they craved! She wore the gifts of all of them, so that should one return suddenly and she did not remember his name, he could always see that she was wearing his gift, and thus feel happy. As long as Muzio loved him life was not unendurable. Muzio's song could be sung in the heat of the tropics or on the ice fields of Alaska. . . .

She was a Mexican by birth, Muzio. Her father, an impoverished Spaniard, had taken to fishing on the Santa Anita. But as the number of his children increased, and as most of them were girls and unable to help him in his work, he built for himself a *chinampa*, a floating garden.

On the lower bank of the lake near Santa Anita, during the low-water season, masses of vegetation, reeds and bushes hung loosely on the surface, rising and falling with the water. The wind and the waters augmented the clump of vegetation, solidifying it. Like a swinging green cradle, held fast at the bottom, the floating island remained there the whole season. By means of poles, the old fisherman made the mass more compact and fastened it to the shore. At night after work he would take his children, and, rowing round it, they interwove the bushes and laced them together. When the mass had become still more compact, he threw strips of turf brought from afar until it formed a more solid superstructure, rising several feet above the water. Muzio's father then planted a little corn and other vegetables. Reeds, growing up from underneath, pierced through the island and made it fast and the whole became as solid as if anchor chains had been thrown to the bottom of the lake. And as the reeds and other water vegetation spread, it chained the *chinampa* securely. What

the waters and wind brought, debris and flotsam, added to the understructure.

In a few years the decaying vegetation, plus the turf and the sand Muzio's father had carried there and spread over the whole, formed ground solid enough to build upon it a light thatch-roofed abode. By the time Muzio was fifteen, the *chinampa* was big enough to feed the numerous family. Even a few long-legged cattle could partly support themselves on the ground.

The *chinampa* was growing larger and larger and freed the old fisherman from worry. But Muzio, the eldest of the children, longed for the companionship of girls her age who lived on land, in houses near the shore. At night she could hear the young men playing their guitars, serenading young ladies who stood on balconies that seemed specially constructed for them upon which to appear in response to the songsters. She could see them clearly on moonlit nights; see even the movements of the fans they so deftly used as a sign language.

But there was no balcony on the *chinampa*. Like the inhabitants of other *chinampas* on the lake, fisherman farms, Muzio's people were considered outcasts by people who lived on *terra firma*.

One day a young man, a stranger, with a low sombrero, green sash, a mantilla thrown negli-

gently over his shoulder, rowed past the *chinampa* in a little *chalupa*. He slackened his oars when he saw Muzio, who had just come from a dip in the lake on the other side of the house, jumping lightly across the green. She was wrapped in a transparent white covering.

'*Buenos dias,*' the stranger called to her. Muzio scarcely turned her head, and rushed into the house. She dressed hastily and came out again. By that time the stranger had rowed all around the floating farm and was back again to the spot where she had first seen him. He seemed to want to speak to her. He made fast his little *chalupa*, and with hat in hand, facing the girl, he bowed low, and before Muzio could realize what he was doing, he was out upon the *chinampa*.

'May I speak to your father, Doña?'

'Father is away fishing, Señor,' Muzio answered.

'May I speak to your mother?' the stranger politely inquired.

By this time the mother had appeared. The usual polite and verbose introduction followed. After the stranger had been assured that the house and all it contained was his, he was invited to sip a cooling drink on the humble patio. He explained that he was a Cuban, a singer. He had come to see with his own eyes the floating gardens of which he had read in his childhood.

Muzio could not take her eyes from him when he spoke. He was suave, polite, handsome. Toward midday he rowed away, but returned before sundown to become acquainted with the master of the house. He begged permission to present to the beautiful Doña Muzio an *abanico* that he had picked up in Venezuela. It was a fan of such gorgeous colour as Muzio had never even dreamed of possessing.

Don Jaime returned again and again to the *chinampa* the following days, and the people in the neighbourhood wondered at night from whence such beautiful song came floating to the shore. So powerful and passionate was the voice it silenced the other serenaders.

Two weeks later, when Don Jaime suddenly left Santa Anita and its environs, Muzio disappeared from her father's *chinampa*. Two months later the young Mexican girl was penniless and starving in the city of Havana, Don Jaime having departed for parts unknown to her.

Decked as she was in beautiful silks with *pendientes* finished in emeralds dangling over her shoulders, she appeared at the 'El Cielo,' then a very small wine house, and after a short conversation with the owner and his wife, she was engaged as a waitress in exchange for food and board. The rest one had to pick up from tips and gifts of customers.

'You will have no difficulty,' the owner's wife assured her. 'No, not with your youth and such beautiful eyes.'

A day or two later, when Muzio's dainty shoes had given way running to and from the tables, she went to a broker to pawn her best ring. The old man behind the counter after a short inspection announced that '*Non es oro todo lo que luce!*' (Not all is gold that glitters.) Which was probably more symbolic than the old man was ever to know.

She served the tables. At first the rough sailors frightened her, but after a few days fear gave way to an appreciation of their naïve and coarse romanticism. Compared to the suave and polite but cruel and lying Don Jaime, they were like playful children.

Then one night at 'El Cielo,' when sailors representing every one of the Central Americas had each sung something in praise of his own country, Muzio, ashamed that hers was not represented, sang for them. Instantly, she sprang from a mere barmaid into a singer. Her voice thrilled them. It thrilled Muzio, who had never heard herself sing. The sailors stayed late that night. They returned the following evening, bringing more friends. A pair of castanets was placed into Muzio's hands. The cook of one of the ships brought forth an accordion. The place was transformed into a singing hall, and the sailors

looked upon Muzio as if she were their child. When a stranger attempted to take liberties with Muzio, the other sailors not over-gently but very firmly rebuffed him. A year later, the owner had to enlarge his place, for people came in flocks to see Muzio dance and to hear her sing.

There was something in Muzio gentle, pure and unaffected, that attracted the rough men of the sea to her. More than one of them, after Muzio had established the relationship of brother and sister between them, told her his life story, weeping upon her shoulder. More than one of them was made to think of his waiting sweetheart somewhere in the pampas or on the Philippine Hills. It was like a bond with each of them when she wore one of their gifts. Her fingers were covered with the cheap trinkets brought to her from all corners of the earth. Her arms were heavy with bracelets — the large *pulseras* Latin American women are so fond of. Then the *privilegiados*, the privileged ones, whose jewels she wore, would bring her pieces of silks, shawls, fans, combs, until she was weighted down with them. In a short time she had to lay all these gifts in a row upon a shelf in the corner of the dancing hall, having them ready to pin or slip on whenever he appeared who had presented her with the gift. When the door opened, and one of the *privilegiados* appeared, Muzio would stop

in the midst of a dance or song, meet him midway with outstretched arms, and the greeting would be as warm as that of brother and sister who had not seen each other for a long time.

As one goes, because of disappointment, to a monastery, Muzio had gone to the dancing hall when Don Jaime had abandoned her. Unconsciously, she came to look upon the men who visited 'El Cielo' as a sister of mercy looks upon patients coming to a hospital, or for prayer at the door of a church after an ungodly act.

One day, Perez Daimo, the big curly-headed Argentino she had known for a good many years, appeared after a long absence. He had been on a tramp steamer which had practically circumnavigated the world. He brought with him gifts for Muzio from almost every port. But when Muzio looked upon the shelf, the large ruby *sortijas*, the ring which he had given her, was not there. Perez hung his head in dismay when she could not find it. He became still more despondent when he observed the other sailors, some of whom he knew, look at one another and wink and smile.

'When a woman loses a man's gift it is because she does not much care for the man,' one of the sailors remarked.

Muzio was beside herself with grief. Such a thing had never happened before. Perez, who

had already taken a few drinks, hung his head when she approached him, and cried, 'That man is right. It is because you have forgotten me.'

In vain Muzio assured him that she remembered him better than any of the other 'brothers.' How could she forget him? She almost persuaded herself she liked him better than the others, just because he was so grief-stricken.

'I know your name. Perez, Perez is your name. Look, I remember the name even of your sister of whom you spoke to me. Carmentita is her name. You said she had hair like mine. I know from whence you come; the name of the village. I have not forgotten you, Perez. You least of all . . .' she assured him with warmth. But he was not to be consoled easily. He had drunk himself to shrewdness, when men dare more, feeling that they can pretend drunkenness afterward as an excuse for bad behaviour. The package of gifts he had brought her was kicked underneath the table and stamped upon violently with his large feet. Muzio felt as if he were kicking her. She felt she did not deserve such treatment; she rose from her seat, refusing to stay another moment near him, and went over to the platform, where she asked the accordion player for one of her favourite lighter songs. After all, no one had a right to treat her like that big Argentino just because his ring had been

lost. She did not once look at him while she sang, so that he would feel his disgrace in her eyes. But soon she was overcome by her better self. The Argentino suffered too much. And it was because of her. He whom we can hurt loves us.

Perez made an effort to appear unconcerned. He spoke overloudly to friends he met. But Muzio could feel that it was merely to kill his great anger. His soul was not in his voice. It sounded empty as though coming from a punctured drum. Slowly, she descended the platform and approached the table at which he was sitting and drinking with other sailors.

'Come with me to another table, Perez,' she said. At first he resisted, but upon her insistence, he followed, and the two sat down in silence. The drinks that had been called for the two remained untouched, for Muzio had put her palm on the glass when he had stretched his fingers toward it. 'You have had enough for to-day, Perez. Don't you believe me when I tell you that the ring was lost?' she asked, leaning close to him. Her warm breath made his long silken eye-lashes flutter. 'It is the first time this has happened, Perez. Don't you believe me?'

'But why should my ring be lost? Why just mine?' Perez cried.

'If the ring of some one else had been lost,'

Muzio replied, 'the other would have had the same right as you to say that.' She said this with intent, because of the complaining quality in his voice. She wanted him to know that while he was not less to her than the others, he was also not more.

Perez became sentimental. 'I hoped my ring meant more to you than the others. Whenever I have been away I have thought of you, Muzio. In China. In Turkey. In Sydney.'

She had heard such words said hundreds of times and knew their value. A loud laugh had always been the answer. But she could not laugh now. She had lost his ring. It caused him pain. And his voice, mellowed by drunkenness, sounded sincere.

'I am really more sorry than you know that I have lost your ring, Perez,' and to give more weight to her words, her hand slipped into his. And still because she was at fault and because she had allowed herself to coquet a little more with him than the others, she allowed him to kiss her hand repeatedly, there, in plain view of every one.

'What is all this about?' cried Muzio suddenly, as she rose. The sailors had made a circle around her table and were dancing to the music of the accordion, while the other guests were laughing and passing ribald remarks.

'Can't a brother kiss a sister's hand without

some one getting ribald about it?' Muzio asked, as she broke through the ring and returned to the platform to sing again.

After most of the guests had drunk themselves underneath the tables, and while the owner and his wife were counting the day's income, Muzio again approached Perez, who was sitting alone, facing the two glasses that had not yet been touched. The package he had brought was on the table.

'Come, show me,' and her fingers undid the package feverishly. And they were wonderful things he had brought. Silks from Cathay, combs from Spain, a long cigarette holder of amber and ivory from Egypt, and trinkets from every corner of the earth. Muzio accepted them with long exclamations of joy at the sight of each of them. She showed more enthusiasm than the things deserved. Her sympathy warmed her heart toward the curly-headed Argentino. How nice and strong he was! How simple! How naïve!

Afraid of overstaying his shore leave, and thereby losing the privilege for the following day, Perez stood up ready to go. As she put out her hand bidding him '*buenas noches*,' he unexpectedly threw an arm around her and kissed her on the mouth.

'Perez,' she gasped, but he was already on the other side of the door. She heard him sing while

his heavy shoes clattered on the cobblestone sidewalk leading to the wharf.

'This one surely is a *privilegiado*,' laughed the inn-keeper, as he looked at the disconcerted dancer.

She gathered up all the gifts Perez had brought her, and tired and weary, she walked to the end of the room, from where rose the narrow stairs leading to her small room above the saloon.

Other men had stolen kisses from her before. But somehow there never was that meaning in a kiss Perez had put into his. She looked at the trinkets and the silks he had brought her and they, too, had a different meaning from those presents the other *privilegiados* had given her. These gifts of Perez compelled her to think of him. If it be true that he had carried in his mind the image of her, over all the seas and all the ports! To be sure, each one of the *privilegiados* had probably at times thought of her, when upon the high seas or in port, but there was a certain lightness in the words when they told her of it. But Perez's thinking of her had evidently meant so much more to him; for the tone in which he spoke seemed deep and dolorous.

Perez, of Argentina, had a warm and passionate voice. What had he thought of her? Did he think of her as most men did of the dancers and

singers in sailors' saloons? Oh, she had heard them tell stories of such places in Japan, in China and ports of the Mediterranean also. She had listened to tales told by men whose tongues were heavy but whose lips fluttered rapidly like feverish wings of sleepy owls.

Muzio fell asleep with Perez's gifts strewn across her bed — angry that he had taken such liberty with her, but rejuvenated by his kiss, nevertheless.

The following evening Perez returned to 'El Cielo,' and as though his action of the night before gave him special prerogative over Muzio, he walked over to her with gallant familiarity and insisted on himself pinning into her hair the red roses he had brought. She wore one of his yellow silk handkerchiefs draped around her black tall comb that rose from the back of her head. She wore another trinket he had given her hanging from a green sash encircling her hips and hanging down at the side to her red-heeled slippers of sky blue. She sang and danced that night more than ever before, for she dreaded to leave the platform and sit near Perez, who had isolated himself after ordering two drinks which remained untouched until she should finally come to him. After exchanging idle words as she passed by the tables of other sailors drinking or playing cards, she approached the Argentino's table,

'You mustn't do that again, Perez,' she said after she had sipped a few times from her glass.

'And why not?' Perez asked surlily. 'One may kiss even the Holy Mother,' he added playfully.

The allusion was very plain.

'I have been like a sister to you,' Muzio argued softly.

'But I have thought of you as a woman,' Perez replied.

'You must not,' Muzio pleaded, with motherly voice, to appease him.

'I have been thinking of you all the time, Muzio. Another year, and I shall leave the sea for ever. I shall go back to my own home on a *hacienda* and settle there. And if you care, Muzio. . . .'

Muzio interrupted, 'You are drunk, Perez. You are drunk.'

'Not with wine,' Perez pleaded further.

'Fool,' Muzio admonished, 'because you like my singing and dancing you think I will be a good mother to your children and know how to milk cows. You are young. Every one seems good enough to you. "*De noche, todos los gatos son pardos.*" (At night, all cats are grey.)'

Yet it was with great effort that she so summarily dismissed the young man's offer. A *hacienda*, a home, a husband, children! Such things

had never been offered to her. Failing in his honourable proposition, Perez, whose passion was stirred as the evening wore on, became more and more centred upon the dancer before him. He left earlier than the previous night. Muzio, fearing he would go to another saloon, felt her heart sink. She made as if to call him back, but decided too late. He was gone. Gone to another café to be amused by other dancers and singers. There was no other explanation for his early departure. After the last sailor had ambled out of the place, Muzio went to her room for the night.

When all was dark and silent, with only the splashing of the waves as a distant sound, there came a soft rapping at one of the windows that led to the inner court of the house.

'Who is there?' Muzio queried, trembling with fear.

The shadow of Perez's head and broad shoulders was outlined distinctly on the white wall opposite the window.

'It is I, Perez,' a voice murmured softly.

Muzio stifled a cry that rose in her throat. She was about to awaken the neighbours, but, moved by another thought, she approached the window on tiptoe and opened it. Even before the window was fully opened, Perez jumped lightly upon the sill and into the room. His arms stretched out to embrace Muzio, but they only touched her

arms which kept him at their length. Her unschooled and quite unconscious method of treating men made Perez collapse before her very eyes in that moment.

'Sit down, Perez,' Muzio invited him softly. The flaming Perez was gone. She could talk to him now. 'I can understand by this, in what manner you have been thinking of me, while you were away on the high seas.'

It shamed the sailor. He hung his head. Muzio talked long and passionately. When Perez left the room an hour later, he had cried in shame as he had never cried before. As he listened to Muzio, for the first time he realized what she really meant to him as a sister; what she meant to all the other men who had made out of 'El Cielo' their Havana rendezvous.

Disturbed and unnerved by the event, Muzio listened with favourable ears to the proposition of a man who mirrored before her eyes wealth to be obtained through her dance and song in other Spanish-speaking countries. And so one day the sailors were amazed to find another woman in Muzio's place. Muzio no longer on the platform of the gaudily painted wine-house! This woman danced even better than Muzio and her voice, too, was perhaps younger and fresher. But *she* was merely a woman. Her dancing meant little more than what they had seen in many

other places. Her singing meant still less. Her smile little more than a professional grin.

And so the word spread from sailor to sailor, from boat to boat, and port to port, that Muzio was no longer at 'El Cielo.' To come to Havana meant no longer what it once did to the toilers of the sea. Other saloons in narrow streets around wharves received their custom. They wandered from one place to the other. When at sea again, they would have more to tell about their experiences in the port, but none of them could forget the woman they so much missed. Muzio gone; Havana was not more than a port, a place to go ashore and get drunk.

And what happened to Muzio? Under the guidance of the man who had convinced her to leave 'El Cielo,' she danced and sang at the better dancing houses of Caracas and Porto Rico. She danced and sang at the concert halls of all the Latin Americas. Instantly, she created a furore. Her sailor songs, which she had picked up in the years of her stay in Havana, and the 'accent' of her feet, as the connoisseurs expressed it, were so genuine and true that she was like no other dancer and singer they had ever seen or heard. The wealthy men who came to see her crowded her dressing-room.

At the end of a few months, she had accumulated a number of bracelets and ear-rings and fans

and combs and rings with precious stones in them, all of them genuine and of great value, mounting into the thousands of pesos. But after the music was over and dancing feet were still, Muzio would think of her sailor friends. She would take out from a little cardboard box the trinkets they had given her. And the false rubies and emeralds, glass and pieces of crystal, were lustreless now that they were not polished daily, but to her they appeared more genuine than all the valuable things of gold, and all the precious stones these wealthy men of Caracas and Porto Rico and Buenos Aires had given her.

And as she put the old rings upon her fingers, she recalled the face and voice of each man. They had all been good to her.

'Muzio, here's a piece of silk. I thought of you in China.'

'Muzio, this cigarette holder I stole from a heathen in India.'

She recalled every word said as the gift was handed to her. Where were they now? What were they thinking of her now that she had disappeared? What did they do when they came to Havana? She felt as if she had betrayed them, like a mother who had abandoned her children. Now she realized much better the words of the old pawnbroker, 'All is not gold that glitters.' Only in her case, it was the real gold that did not glitter as well as the imitation. For her the real

jewels were those the hardy and rough men at 'El Cielo' had given her. They were her friends, friends who thought of her, loved her. . . . And Perez, where was Perez, the impetuous Argentineo?

One evening Muzio appeared suddenly at 'El Cielo.' The other woman was in the midst of a song when Muzio entered.

'Muzio!' the sailors cried, drowning the other woman's song. A dozen hands stretched out towards her. She sat down with them. In vain did the other woman sing, trying to attract attention. They had ears and eyes only for Muzio.

Muzio looked at her fingers, and inquired: 'Let's see. Where is Mendez, the man who gave me this bracelet? Where is Sancho who gave me this *saraja*? Where is the other one, that big tall Nicaraguan who brought me the *pendientes* I am now wearing?' For she wore everything that had ever been given to her.

And the news spread all about the wharf that Muzio was back. Within an hour, half of her *privilegiados* were accounted for. The others were on the high seas. They forced her to mount the platform and sing. It was like a fresh breeze after a long calm to hear her sing and see her dance. Suddenly she asked aloud, 'Has anybody seen Perez, the tall, curly-headed Argentineo?'

Some one said he had seen him on an American boat that had landed that very day. He had scarcely finished saying that when Perez, accompanied by another man, appeared in the doorway. There was long rejoicing. In her great joy, Muzio felt more free than she had ever felt with all of them. She allowed them to kiss her hand and many of them kissed her face. Only Perez, who had probably come nearer her soul than anyone before, made no attempt at familiarity with her. He sat down with his friend at an isolated table, ordered three drinks, and waited. After the first commotion had subsided, Muzio bethought herself of Perez and went over to his table. She felt warmer toward him than toward anybody else. She put her bejewelled hand upon his.

'You see I have not lost a single gift of yours. I am wearing them all, Perez.'

'That is good,' he answered humbly, passionately, putting his other hand over hers.

They looked each other searchingly in the eye for a moment. Many things were remembered. Many other things were forgiven and forgotten.

'Let's drink,' Muzio suddenly called. She raised her glass as she stood up. It was a signal for the others to jump on chairs and tables and drink to Muzio's health.

'You have not met my friend,' Perez said to

Muzio, introducing his companion. 'He is on the sea for pleasure. His father owns the vessel on which I sail.'

'I have met the Señora before,' the man courteously reminded Muzio, 'in Buenos Aires, two months ago, if the Señora remembers.'

Muzio looked closely at the man. 'Of course I remember you.' And instantly she recalled a very disagreeable occurrence in which a young man, the son of a very wealthy family, had behaved grossly toward her.

The crowd of sailors became so insistent for Muzio to mount the platform again that she had to comply with the request instantly and leave Perez's table. After she had sung and danced, Perez turned to his companion and said 'So, you have met Señora Muzio before?'

'Indeed I have,' the other answered, with an ugly smirk, and a significant movement of thumb and forefinger in the air.

Perez emptied his glass hastily.

'I see you are also very friendly with her,' the man added, poking Perez in the ribs, keeping his eyes on the dancer all the time. 'Why should she dance here when the best theatres are welcoming her?'

'She is like a sister to all of us,' Perez said, gulping and swallowing heavily.

'A sister!' the other laughed loudly. 'Ha! ha!'

'A sister, a sister,' Perez insisted, his blood

mounting to his face. But the other man laughed louder.

'If that's the case, I, too, am a brother,' he added, and the intonation and the mien and movements implied a meaning other than the words.

'*Emoustêro!* (Liar!)' Perez yelled at the top of his voice, the dagger he carried at his belt flashing in his hand. Instantly the whole place was in an uproar.

'What is it? What is it?' they shouted from all sides, as they came toward Perez's table.

Muzio cleaved her way rapidly toward the two men.

'What is it?' she asked, placing herself between Perez and the other. Never before had she seen Perez so furious. His dagger was raised above her head, high enough to kill an ox with one blow. The blade glistened like facets of a polished diamond.

'It is a remark he has made about you,' Perez shouted.

Muzio turned livid. The man had lied. She knew if she should say that he lied Perez's dagger would sink into the stranger's heart.

'Tell him he lied,' roared Perez. Her lips refused to utter the words that would kill a man. She realized in one instant Perez's great love for her and his terrible rage. She sighed and hung her head in mute significance.

A sharp pain shot through her body. It was like a flash of lightning. Her knees sagged underneath her, her eyes opened for a moment, and they saw her own blood dripping from the dagger in the hands of Perez.

Seed

I HAD arrived at the little village of Isman Cesme, in the north of the Dobrudja, after unspeakable hardships on the road. Half-way through the forest of Babadag my little mare, after sniffing the air, took the bit in her teeth and galloped wildly until she fell over a tree-stump and broke a hind leg. I had to put her out of her misery and continued my journey on foot, twenty miles of forest through a blinding rain. Covered with mud, ragged, my bleeding feet bare, I knocked at the door of Ishmael Al Talaal's hut at sunrise of a September day. The black-bearded Tcherkess peasant, fully costumed, in large yellow pantaloons and velvet burnoose, a heavy green turban covering the top of the cone of his red fez, appeared in the dark opening and caught my unsteady body in his powerful arms.

When I awoke, many hours later, for I had slept the whole day and far into the night, the hut was loud with the voices of men, women, and children. They were all seated on the floor round a very low white-pine table on which were steaming dishes of hot *pilaf*, broiled quarters of young lamb, and bowls of honey, still in the comb, oozing a liquid as golden as freshly pressed oil. The odour of the food brought tears to my eyes. I was hungry.

'Place for the stranger,' called out Ishmael when he had seen me. They all rose to their feet.

'*Hosh geldi*,' every one welcomed me, bowing low.

'*Hosh boordum*,' I answered and sat down near my host. He threw his coat over my bare shoulders, bade me wash my hands, and would not touch food until I had partaken of the honey he offered in a large wooden spoon.

'It is the custom of my people to offer honey as the first food to strangers, that there be no bitterness between us.'

'That there be no bitterness,' the others repeated after him.

After I had stilled my first hunger my host told me it was the feast of the Ramadan, the ninth month of the year, during which Moham-medans the world over fast from sunrise to sundown and eat at night. That was the last night of the Ramadan. There were songs, and even dances; but I was too tired to partake of their joys after I had stilled my hunger. Closing my eyes, I leaned against the thickly tapestried mud wall and fell asleep again while rhythms were being beaten on the hide-covered drum, and bronzed *bayadères* swayed their marvellously muscled torsos.

In the morning, after oiling my body and dressing my wounds, Ishmael Al Talaal excused

the mediocre food he offered by telling me the story of the singer his grandfather had fed some forty years before.

‘One morning, a weary, ragged, homeless singer, coming from the Black Sea, reached our village. We opened our doors and fed him with lamb’s meat and honey at our own tables.

‘Because the spring floods and rains had washed away bridges and roads, he remained with us, telling tales and singing the songs of the many villages and peoples he had met. To help him while away his loneliness; our men taught him to sing our songs, our *bayadères* danced, our youngsters raced the young colts, and our women showed him the silks in the dye vats and the weaves of our looms. For we were proud of our horses – the best Arab blood flowed in them – and proud, also, of the craft of our women at the loom.

‘One day, after the river had withdrawn to its bed and the marshes had dried and the roads had hardened again, the singer prepared to leave us. What our book tells us to do we did. We filled the stranger’s bag with dried meat and bread and honey, so that the meat and the bread and the honey in our houses should be blessed every time he stilled his hunger on the road. And the grey-bearded wanderer’s face was tear-stained when he took leave of us. “Never have

brothers been more brotherly. To the people living on the roads that lead from sea to sea I shall sing of your village; of the sweetness of your meat and the flavour of your honey; of the swiftness of your horses and the softness of the wool of your lambs; of your strong men and beautiful women. And above all, I shall sing of your doors as wide open to strangers as your hearts are. And may Allah always be with you."

"The coming of that singer to our village happened long ago – when I was young. And the customs of our people were like our seed for the fields, the mother bees of the hives, the rams of the corrals, and the stallions of the stables – young but not new. To-day all we have is new – yet it is old, not aged, old, old. . . . Why? Because we have housed and fed that stranger. He sang of the flavour of our honey in the hostelries and *kanaks* where men assemble, so they came from afar and bought our new swarms to hive in their villages.

"And they exchanged two and three swarms of theirs against our one. We became richer in hives than we ever were. But was our new honey as sweet?

"And they exchanged two and three of their rams and ewes against our one. It made us richer in lambs than we ever were. But was our new wool as soft?

'And of our own stables and fields they took seed.

'And when they had given and we had taken we were really poorer by what we were apparently richer. And too frequent intercourse with strangers made our men richer by barter instead of work. Our old customs left on the backs of our horses and the wings of our bees. What replaced them was new – not young; raw – like new wine before the dregs have settled to the bottom. For even the oldest wine becomes troubled when carried from one place to another.

'The will of Allah is the will of Allah. But have we sinned because we have fed a homeless singer? It is written "Allah will repay seven times hospitality to a stranger." We have received of all more than seven times of what we have given. The numbers are there but not the quality. Why? Because the honey of the bee that feeds on honey is poor and of unpleasant flavour. Our grain multiplied not on our fields but through barter. Our men wrenched on the mart what Allah had promised, instead of waiting until he had fulfilled his promise.

'In the same manner also our horses, lambs, and swarms multiplied. In the market-place our granaries overflowed with wealth we had not grown. The untilled fields hardened. Our stables resounded with neighings of horses unaccustomed to our plains, strangers to one another, strangers

to our men, unloved by them, bartered, exchanged. To-day in one stable object of barter, to-morrow in another.

• 'And because of the coarse wool of our lambs the children wriggled in their clothing but danced no longer.

'Illness creeps upon the heavy feet of idleness. To-day we are the poorest of the poor. . . .

'Because we fed a homeless singer. If another one passes our village we shall feed him and then I shall say to him, "Go, sing our praises, if thou must, but sing them to other homeless singers, not to *Zapciis*, to merchants, in hostleries and *kanaks*."

'My name is Ishmael Al Talaal. I descend from the hundred thousand Tcherkeszes driven hither by a cruel Tsar less than a hundred years ago to populate the swamps of the Dobrudja. We have populated them. The bodies of my forefathers are under the paths that lead in and out of the swamps from the shores of the Danube, from Chernavoda to the plains of Silistria. There have been many wars since. We have heard the cannon shots. But we, we have battled with the fevers of the Dobrudja, and we have won; only a handful of us, true, but we have won. We have won the battles with the long black winters to which we were strangers; and, hillmen, we have learned to live, on plains of yellow clay. Allah was with us in all our

struggles until we heeded the "*Zapciis*" and enriched ourselves with grain we had not grown and cattle we had not raised.'

On the fourth day, rested and clothed, I told Ishmael I desired to leave. He would not hear of it. "

'You must stay to the end of the feast,' he argued, 'and then another day until the two weddings of the year are celebrated. It would be insult to leave before.'

I had to agree. Besides, he wanted me to see the races that day. He also wanted to show me the wheat growing from seed his grandfather had left.

'It was only a handful when he died. But I have sown it with care and gleaned every stalk by hand, so as not to lose one single grain. The following year I had twenty-eight times as much. Not a grain of this was lost or eaten. It was sowed again. And so every year.' Another year and he would have enough seed to distribute to all the inhabitants and thus repair the great loss incurred years ago when all was sold to *Zapciis*. His grandfather had been the only one who had thought of keeping seed of the old before taking the new. Now it was Ishmael's life ambition to restore the old glory of the village. And it was, indeed, good heavy grain that he showed me, heavy and hard; grain grown

on thick, short stalks. Grain grown for good bread and not for sale.

An hour before noon, barefooted, red-fezed youngsters, coming from all directions of the village, singing at the top of their nasal shrill voices, were leading well-groomed beribboned horses to a freshly mown field at the bottom of the hill. I had seldom seen such a mixture of breeds in one place. Short-legged Moldavian ponies with hoofs much too large for their slender limbs. Hungry-looking Dobrudjan beasts, the camels of the Dobrudja, all ribs and legs, who thrive and work on a handful of straw and the smell of an oat. Large 'Musicals,' Russian horses, high, thin-jointed giants with small heads and furtive eyes, and a mongrel mixture of young colts of all bloods struggling to adapt themselves to the rigorous conditions of the country.

And they came from all sides, beribboned, oiled, combed; with tails and manes in twists, and heads held high, sniffing and neighing, prancing, rearing, and kicking impatiently while the lively boys called to one another and the villagers were arriving singly, and in groups, to the racing field.

When all were assembled, a deafening noise rose from the Tartar settlement. Soon afterward, passing through the Bulgarian part of the village, the Tartars, astride, galloped their horses to the racing field. They were received with loud huzzahs by the youngsters and low salaams by

the older people; for the Tartars, being Moham-medans, were also celebrating the Bairam. It was the one week of peace between Tartars and Tcherkeszes. Lots were drawn. Each Tartar horse was paired with a horse belonging to a Tcherkesze. When that had been arranged the betting began. The noise was deafening. Odds were offered and refused. Loud laughter . . . quarrels. . . .

I was standing near my host, Ishmael Al Talaal. He was very quiet and thoughtful. His two wives were behind him, silent and thoughtful as he was. But his daughter, Teptath, was impatient for the race to begin. Her face was uncovered. She was fifteen, tall, stout-limbed, full-throated, coarse-haired. Her face was long and oval-shaped. Her well-shaped lips were red; her eyes, deep set and black. Ishmael Al Talaal's family seemed to be the only pure-blooded Tcherkesze one. The others, the youngsters especially, were of a mixture of bloods. There were women as blonde as the blondest Lipovan with children in their arms as black as Africans. And fathers as black as deep-desert Bedouins with blue-eyed, blonde-haired sons.

The bickering for odds and handicaps lasted for hours. For the Tartars, being the guests, were served with strong *boze* and sour *bragga* made of fermented millet flour and bran. And the drink was rising to their heads.

Finally, the first race was started. It was

one lap, of about a mile. The winner of each race was to receive one silver *medjidie* from the hands of Teptath. The Tartars with their bullet-headed squat wives and half-naked children assembled on one side, the Tcherkeszes on the other side of the field. A deafening noise and the soft thud of unshod hoofs began to grow fainter and fainter. The excitement increased after the first half of the lap had been run. The Tartar horse was gaining ground. The Tcherkeszes were shouting encouragement. But it was of no avail. The winners were taunting the losers. The half-naked Tartar boy received the silver *medjidie* from Teptath's hand. The second race was already under way. The Tartars won again. And they won the third race and the fourth. Ishmael Al Talaal's face grew paler and paler as the races were run. Not one was won by his people. The Tartars mocked and taunted the Tcherkeszes. 'What sort of a people are you to make "Tcherapackahs," turtles, out of horses?' And there was nothing the Tcherkeszes could answer. For they lost each race. They were ashamed, dishonoured, humiliated.

Echmet Kondir, the chief of the Tartar settlement, came to sit near Ishmael. It was the last race.

'What is the matter with your horses?' he asked, with seeming compassion. The irony was not lost on Ishmael.

'Was the grain so weak this summer? Or are your riders afraid to be unseated should their horses go at full speed?'

Ishmael did not answer.

'If I were you I should buy a few of our horses to improve the blood,' Echmet advised.

The last race disposed of, Ishmael rose to his feet. 'Best against best, Echmet. I shall race my best horse, one of our own breed, of the breed we raised before we had crowded our stables with mongrels and corrupted our soil with grain from the corners of the earth. I shall race one of mine against the best of yours. And if you care to put five hundred *medjidies* on your horse I am willing.'

'Six hundred,' offered Echmet, his hand ready on his purse.

People on both sides surrounded the chiefs.

'Six hundred and fifty,' called Ishmael. And turning to Teptath, he ordered, 'Bring out Pasha.'

The Tcherkeszes were heartened again. 'Huzzah, huzzah!' they yelled.

'Go fetch my Trepoy,' Echmet ordered to one of his men. Then, turning to Ishmael again, he said, 'Two hundred ducats in gold that my horse beats yours in four laps around this field.'

They shook hands on that and immediately began counting the gold pieces, throwing them together on a coat spread before them.

'*Bir - One*' - called out Echmet, throwing the first piece.

'*Iki*,' called out Ishmael, throwing his piece. The Tartars and Tcherkeszes surrounded the two squatting chiefs and counted aloud with them.

'*Ich. Dort. Besh. Alti. . .*.' The pieces of gold rang, and clinked on the heap of the ducats and were counted aloud, one by one, as the two contestants threw them down from their leathern purses.

'Ishmael Al Talaal will be four hundred gold ducats the richer in an hour from now,' taunted the Tcherkeszes.

'He will be poorer of two hundred ducats!' the Tartars laughed.

'I bet you ten ducats, Pasha, Ishmael's horse, wins,' yelled a Tcherkesze.

'The bet is covered,' answered a Tartar and threw two gold pieces down.

By the time the two horses were led to the post there were hundreds of bets in gold and silver and copper. For the women and children were also betting. To the eye there was little choice between the two horses. Ishmael's horse was a trifle lighter than the other, and its beautiful black head was a little smaller than that of the chestnut horse belonging to Echmet. They were both Arabs, glossy-coated, nervous, deer-legged, with veins showing like networks on breast and hindquarters.

Ishmael Al Talaal approached his horse, patted,

kissed it, and pulled gently at its ears. Pasha scratched the ground with his flexible right fore-leg as if he wanted to assure that he understood what was expected of him; to redeem the whole race of Tcherkeszes in the eyes of the world.

Echmet was meanwhile inspecting the saddle belt of his Trepoy. When he passed near Pasha, the Tcherkesze horse became very nervous, rose on its hind-legs, and neighed wildly. It made Echmet angry. 'What is it you have taught your horse? To hate us?' he queried, turning furiously to Ishmael.

Yet, even as he saddled his own horse, he looked appraisingly at Pasha. Echmet passed his tawny clawlike fingers through his coarse scant black beard and smacked his thick lips.

'A beautiful horse, Effendi Ishmael. It will be a pleasure to win from him.'

'Win, if you can,' the Tcherkesze chief answered. 'Your horse is also a very fine one.'

'Abdul yonder, my son, will ride my Trepoy. Come here, Abdul,' Echmet ordered.

Abdul, a bow-legged youngster of about sixteen, hopped agilely on to the saddle and smilingly answered to his assembled friends who shouted advice and encouragement. Ishmael called to his daughter, 'Teptath . . . Teptath . . . come here. You'll ride Pasha.'

The Tcherkeszes wondered whether their chief

was not putting himself at a disadvantage. Echmet Kondir was angry again.

'Is it insult or trickery?' he asked, while his hand gripped the dagger at his belt. 'Do you intend to insult our men by putting a girl on the saddle of your horse?'

'By Allah,' Ishmael answered calmly, 'she is my daughter. I have no sons, as you well know. In her alone I have confidence, the horse being a stranger even to my men.'

Then the two men sat down one near the other, the coat with the heap of golden ducats between them. Again there was some trouble at the post. Pasha reared, shook, neighed, and sniffed the air as if a disagreeable odour had come to his nostrils when he was veered near the other horse on which sat the Tartar boy. He quieted down only after he had drawn apart a dozen feet from them. Echmet looked furiously at Ishmael, who met his eye squarely, neutralizing it, as a fighter does when he catches the blow of the other on his fists.

'Ready?' shouted an old Chazar who had appointed himself master of ceremonies.

'Ready,' answered Teptath and Abdul at the same time.

'*Toptan!* (Go!)' shouted the old Chazar, flashing his cowhide whip in the air. The race was on. As if shot by a powerful catapult, the two horses jumped forward. At first Pasha lost some

ground by swerving aside when the Tartar rider approached him, but soon he caught up with the other one. Gripped by an older instinct than the one of hate, he ran neck to neck with Trepoy. There was not a nose of difference when they passed by Ishmael and Echmet on the first lap of the race. The two horses running close together were like one eight-legged two-headed monster that skimmed the ground. An almost religious silence had seized the onlookers. They followed with their eyes the swift-moving dark form but made no sound. Pasha and Trepoy passed just as close together on the second lap.

'A marvellous horse you have,' Echmet congratulated Ishmael.

'So is your horse, Echmet Kondir.'

Enmity between the two men had disappeared in their admiration for horseflesh. As a matter of fact, the Tartar's eyes were more on the other horse than on his. Before the third lap was over the Tcherkeszes began to shout. Pasha was drawing ahead slowly, slowly; cleaving himself apart from the other one. A nose at first. Then a full head. The Tartars were shouting advice to Abdul. But Echmet was as engrossed in Pasha's performance as if it were his own horse. Pasha was gaining ground, foot by foot. A deafening noise arose when the last lap was started with Pasha his full length ahead of the other horse.

'A good horse, by Allah! And a brave daughter. One worthy of a dozen sons,' Echmet said, and his hand gripped the hand of Ishmael. When Pasha had won four lengths ahead of the other the opposing camps were dumbfounded to see their chiefs shaking hands. So they all shook hands. The score was evened. The winning of one race had wiped out the former humiliations.

'There is no shame losing to such a horse, Abdul,' Echmet shouted to his son, who dismounted, shamefaced, humiliated.

Ishmael Al Talaal gathered his daughter in his arms, and gave her the coat on which the heap of gold was lying. 'To your mother, now!' he ordered.

Then there was more rejoicing. The Tartars left in groups for their camp. The Tcherkeszes, holding their winnings in their fists, approached to kiss Pasha before he was led to his stable. It adjoined Ishmael's hut, separated only by a thin wall.

Echmet remained standing near Ishmael. He followed the horse with his eyes, as a man follows the woman he covets.

'Four hundred ducats for your stallion,' he offered laconically to Ishmael.

'Pasha is not for sale,' the Tcherkesze answered.

'Five hundred?'

'No.'

'Six hundred?'

'He is not for sale. Good night, friend. I am ready for my evening prayers.' And upon this Ishmael turned toward his hut.

'It is horses like Pasha we have given away for ten times as many and one-tenth the real worth,' my host explained. 'For all our horses were like Pasha and not like the scrubs you have seen to-day. And you shall eat with us to-day the first bread from flour of my wheat, that you may taste what will be our daily fare from next year on.'

My sleeping quarters were in the hut leaning on the back wall of the stable in which were Ishmael's four horses, including Pasha.

The drink of fermented rice, of which I had partaken with the others rather liberally, was much too much for me. I fell asleep in my clothes. It had just begun to grow blue on the mountains when I was awakened by the restless neighing and kicking of one of the horses. I listened attentively and decided to go and see. But when I reached the door of the stable Ishmael was already there.

'A Tartar is in the neighbourhood. That is the cause of Pasha's uneasiness, my friend,' he told me as he inspected the adjoining field of corn.

While we were talking Teptath came out in her bare feet to inquire the reason of the commo-

tion. The conversation between us, although carried on in low tones, seemed to animate the mountains and the valley; doors squeaked, roosters crowed, cows bellowed and men and women came out and looked about; after which they began to look after their cattle. A few minutes later the clang of iron was heard in the smithy. Thick black smoke rose in billows from the low stack and the hammer intoned its morning song on the steel of the anvil.

Ishmael looked about once more, sniffing the air, then he entered the hut to perform his ablutions.

Teptath lingered near the stable, eagerly peering in all directions.

'He is a wonderful rider,' she suddenly exclaimed, a bit too loudly.

'Who?' I asked, veering around. She was looking away as she answered.

'Abdul . . . Abdul . . . Abdul . . . ' she repeated, each time a little louder.

From between the golden corn stalks rose a curly black head. Teptath made believe she had not seen anything.

'How long are you yet going to remain with us?' she asked, leaning familiarly on my shoulder and leading me away to the other end of the hut.

'Four more days,' I answered.

'Then this morning you shall have roast corn

for breakfast, stranger,' she answered, and darted away into the corn field. A half-hour later as I bit into the browned tender kernels she had served to her father and me, I looked into the girl's dancing eyes while she served the black coffee from the long-handled copper pot into the small tup.

'It's fine corn. I picked the best ears,' she remarked, blushing.

'I shall have to watch Pasha closely,' Ishmael mentioned casually after taking a spoonful of honey.

The Bairam feast being still on, only light work was done by the people.

I was helping my host with the stretching of some old nets when we were disturbed by the arrival of Echmet Kondir. He was in his best clothes. His broad leather belt, studded with stones of all shades, was heavy with weapons. The turban over his brown fez was as white as foam.

'*Kte Khabar?* (What's new?),' he inquired by way of greeting.

'*Khabar jock* (Nothing new),' Ishmael answered, and continued his work.

'It is about the horse that I have come,' Echmet explained.

'Well, the horse is mine, Effendi. What more is there to know? And he is not for sale.'

'Everything has its price,' grinned Echmet. 'It all depends how much the buyer is willing to pay.'

'Also whether the seller is willing to sell,' replied Ishmael.

'Everything has its price,' argued Echmet stubbornly. 'Six hundred golden ducats, eh?'

'No.'

'Six hundred and fifty?'

'No.'

A long silence followed. Ishmael worked peacefully at the nets. Echmet's eyes, grim, terrible, were on him. An imperceptible movement of Echmet's hand toward his belt straightened Ishmael's shoulders. The two men looked at each other for a few seconds.

'Seven hundred golden ducats?' inquired Echmet politely as if nothing untoward had happened.

'That horse is not for sale,' Ishmael answered.

Echmet bowed low and left slowly with Ishmael walking silently by his side.

When the Tartar was gone my host returned to his work patiently. Suddenly he rushed into the stable. I heard him talk to his favourite horse. A moment later he led Pasha out to graze. 'I shall have to watch him closely now,' Ishmael told me. It seemed to me his voice was unsteady and that he was a trifle paler as he resumed his work. 'I shall have to watch him, for I know

what Echmet is capable of when aroused.' While we were thus occupied Teptath approached Pasha and talked to him in low tones. The horse was uneasy when she first approached him, as if she too carried a disagreeable odour.

'Weren't you proud yesterday of my daughter?' Ishmael questioned me.

'She is a magnificent rider,' I answered.

'Oh! she is of the old stock. She is of the old seed. Like my grain and my stallion. And they are not for sale. They belong to the Tcherkeszes of Isman Cesme.'

We worked till noon. After the midday meal folks strolled around—visiting, laughing, playing games, and teasing the youngsters that were to be married a few days later.

I had never seen Teptath so much about as that day. Her winning the race had won for her a special place among the people. She was made much of by everybody. Her voice rose above the voices of the others when she spoke and laughed.

Toward the evening they all sat down in front of one of the brides' huts and intoned the bridal song. It was composed of four verses. Each verse was sung first by one of the crowd, then repeated in a lower key by all. Teptath was chosen as soloist. The group moved on to repeat the same performance at the hut of the second, third, and fourth bride; and every time Teptath

was the soloist, although there were prettier voices in the crowd.

But, when the men were at prayer, at sundown, she darted away to the cornfield.

That night I heard two voices whispering low behind the stable. The neighing of Pasha had awakened me. An instant later a pistol shot echoed through the valley. I put my head out of the window. Ishmael was inspecting the barn and peering through the darkness with the help of a wax candle that burned within a lantern.

'Have you heard anything?' he asked me.

'Only the neighing of the horse.'

'I shall have to watch closely,' he muttered as he returned to his hut.

It was early morning when I heard Teptath's soft tread on the path as she was returning to the women's quarters.

Toward noon of that day Echmet Kondir appeared again in front of Ishmael's hut.

'*Kte Khabar?*' he inquired.

'*Khabar jock* (Nothing new). I am sorry to have disturbed your sleep by discharging my pistol last night,' Ishmael apologized, looking his visitor in the eyes.

'I was not disturbed, my neighbour. I slept soundly. But what has occasioned that? Robbers?'

'I thought I heard some one prow! about the stable, Echmet Kondir.'

'That would be a calamity!' the Tartar cried out in anguish. 'Ishmael, sell me that horse.' He brought his two hands together in prayer. 'I can neither eat nor sleep. I want to own that horse. My peace, my pride, my life depend on it. Sell me that horse, Ishmael Al Talaal.'

'He is not for sale, Echmet Kondir.'

'But if a man comes to you, as I have come, and says to you, as I have, that his happiness, nay, his life, depends on the possession of that horse, and he offers, as I have, all he has, seven hundred, eight hundred – eight hundred – Ishmael Al Talaal, a thousand ducats of gold, what then?' cried Echmet, wringing his hands.

'I shall answer him, he is not for sale. I shall never sell him.'

'And if I offered my horse in the bargain? He is as good – almost as good – as your Pasha, what then, Ishmael Al Talaal?'

'Why then do you desire my stallion, yours being almost as good as mine?'

'Because I love him. Must I tell you more? You are a horseman, even as I am, and you understand.'

'I also love him. He is mine. Seed for the pride of my people.'

'Then,' hissed Echmet between his teeth, 'it's war between us, Ishmael. And when I possess

Pasha I shall wean him of the cursed habit of kicking and neighing when he smells the approach of my blood.'

'No one of your blood shall ever ride him,' thundered Ishmael after the departing Tartar. 'You and the *Zapciis* have bartered us out of everything of value; of grain and seed, and cattle and women, and given us chaff in exchange.'

That day, and the following, Teptath played with Pasha more than usual. And on the last night of the Bairam feast she rode him in the torchlight procession around the seven fires burning near each of the huts of the four brides. Some young Tartars had come into the Tcherkesze quarters to witness the celebration, and I noted that Pasha shied less and was less nervous at their approach. After some of the fires had been extinguished she returned the horse to the stable.

When I entered my sleeping quarters I heard low whisperings in the stable.

Abdul spoke.

'You see . . . he is getting accustomed to me. In another few days he will be as friendly as my own horse.'

'You must leave the stable, Abdul,' insisted Teptath.

'It's raining outside. It's so pleasant in the hay,' whined the boy.

'But I must go into the hut! Oh! if my father

were to discover us! It would mean death, Abdul, death.'

'How you tremble for your life! Teptath! I thought you were braver than that.'

'Fool . . . it's for your life that I tremble.'

After that I heard low laughter mingled with soft weeping. When the last of the revellers had put out the last fire and wished one another a good night's rest, Abdul disappeared from the stable through the opening on the roof. Teptath followed him through the door.

A little later Ishmael Al Talaal with four other men, evidently taken into his confidence, came to sleep in the stable.

I shall never forget the great wedding night! The silver-studded deep blue curved above our heads. The watchful pale moon, the lone eye of the invisible one, tinted the top of the brown-green trees and the yellow mountains. Heavy black smoke rose in billows, spat out from the hundred and one twig fires burning around an immense circle. The white-clad *Hogea* was standing in the centre and blessed the newly-married couples. The young husbands were garbed in green and red, and their wives were dressed in pale blues and yellows. The men were singing monotonous songs and the women were beating muffled drums. Odours of broiled meats and burning honey permeated the air. And outside

the fire circle an incessant procession of beribboned horses on which riders performed with swords and knives and jumped through circles of fire.

In the midst of all the joy a lone bent figure appeared suddenly near Ishmael, who was engaged in conversation with the *Hogea*.

It was Echmet Kondir. All voices were silenced. The procession stopped still. The drums ceased beating. The Tartar bowed low before the man of God, then he sat down near Ishmael. He talked earnestly for a few minutes, but, as Ishmael shook his head negatively, he implored with head low and arms raised above his head. The *Hogea* interrupted the conversation. Ishmael listened respectfully to the end, still he shook his head negatively and repeated one word to all entreaties, '*Jock, jock, jock!* (No, no, no!)' Tep-tath, holding Pasha's bridle strap, was standing close by me while the conversation was going on. The three men rose to their feet. Echmet, accompanied by Ishmael, was leaving the circle. He had aged years in the few days. A great sorrow had gnawed and consumed him. He stopped and looked longingly at the horse. Then his moist eyes turned pleadingly to the eyes of Ishmael, who was himself in tears.

For a long time the two men looked at each other without saying a word. Then, Ishmael approached his horse. Fondling it, he covered

its eyes with the shawl that hung on his left arm. A flash, a muffled detonation, and Pasha crumpled dead to the ground.

And while the two men wept with their arms wound around the dead horse's neck, Teptath was crying in the arms of Abdul, 'Have pity on me, father, for I love him so!'

And there was one more wedding that night.

The Master

YEAR after year the Tartars of Silistria had crossed the little forest that stood between their village and the Dobrudjan pasture-fields of the Roumanian shepherds and stolen their sheep. Like wolves, they fattened themselves on meat they killed that did not belong to them.

The Tartars and the wolves were the most dangerous enemies of the flocks. Against the wolves the shepherds had trained their *ogars*, dogs bred out of mother wolves ; but against the black Tartars they had little, if any defence, until Corbu, Jancu Corbu, son of one-eyed Bujor Corbu, had gone out and given them battle.

Jancu, who had been on his way home with his flock, was attacked by the thieves. On recovering from the bullet-wound in his arm, he organized the youth of the village, and placing himself at their head, although only eighteen years old, he invaded, gave battle, and crushed the 'thieves' village' across the border.

After Bujor's son had vanquished the cattle-thieves, the people of his own village were so impressed by his strength and ability that they began to look toward him for help in every trouble that befell them. If there was a disease among the cattle, they were sure that Jancu would know how to rid them of it. When they thought themselves overtaxed, they would send him to the seat of the

Roumanian Government to obtain an amelioration of their conditions. At the wolf-hunts, early in the winter, through the dense forests, they wanted Jancu at the head; and as they were no more molested by the Tartars, and after Jancu had succeeded in almost everything he had undertaken to do for them, the people of Cerna grew wealthier, their flocks increased, and in a few years the plains and hills and marshes of the neighbourhood upon which grazed their cattle, their sheep, had become too limited to feed them. The shepherds had to look for other grazing grounds away from their old settlement. Indeed, two years after Jancu had conquered the Tartar village, a pact with the former enemies was arrived at, so that the sheep of Cerna could pass the border and graze on the other side, the Tartars being only too ready to get the small payment in sheep from the Roumanian shepherds, to rebuild their homes and restock their flocks.

Then one day, late in the winter, the old *starost*, the mayor of Cerna, died, and the people unanimously elected Jancu in his place.

Throughout all the ceremony Jancu sat quietly near his sweetheart, smiling abstractedly, stroking the long and heavy fur of his dog Cubak, who lay at his feet. Cubak looked up at his master. He understood that something very important was happening. Every time his master's name was mentioned, he emitted a little bark, raising his

muzzle and turning round and round with joy or defiance; for in the measure his master was happy, Cubak was.

The following spring Cubak was sent over the border to guard the largest flock of sheep he had yet had in charge. He trotted proudly behind them, filled with the pride of well-fed strength. His master was not with him. Jancu had to remain in the village to attend to more important business than sheep-raising; and in his stead another man was sent as shepherd, Tudor, son of Jancu's father's best friend.

On the road to the grazing grounds, edging the Tartar settlement, Cubak, the dog who had been taught and who had learned to guard his flock as much against Tartars as against wolves, was greatly surprised to see Tudor lead his sheep in the direction of the enemy. He bore down with all his weight upon the shepherd in an attempt to throw him, and by himself tried to turn the scattering flock homeward. The young shepherd, not understanding the dog's actions, raised his stick and hit Cubak a solid blow on the head. Confused by what was happening, and which he did not understand, Cubak marched alongside the herd, keeping the young shepherd constantly in sight, surveying him. If Tudor had ever entertained the thought that Cubak might look upon him as his master, that day taught him differently. When they entered the muddy road

lined by the first huts of the Tartar settlements, Cubak became so upset he began to turn widely around the whole flock, nibbling at the legs of the sheep the better to keep them in a compact mass.

For generations and generations his kind had been taught by their masters that the Tartars were their enemies, that the Tartar scent was as dangerous as that of the wolf. And now, suddenly, the Tartars were allowed to come near and talk to the shepherd as they stroked the wool of the lambs with their dark hands. And he, Cubak, was kept away by the shepherd with the long stick. The very same men who had wounded him and his master, and whom his master had fought with to take the sheep back from them, he was now told to let go before sinking his fangs into them. It dawned upon the dog that Tudor was betraying his beloved master, and committing a crime against the flock, the holy flock.

A little later that day, having passed through several friendly Tartar settlements, greeted by the men and hailed by the gaily trousered women, the flock of pure white sheep, now muddy to the belly, arrived at the new grazing grounds. There were other flocks, some of them shepherded by Tartars, and others by people of Cubak's own village, who had arrived there before; for Jancu had been late that year because of his numerous other duties. Some of them were there when Jancu's

flock arrived, and others came a few hours later. Cubak could not sleep the whole night. The other dogs were also demoralized. Yet each one had his accustomed master, not like Cubak. He was apprehensive of what was going to happen, something the nature of which he could not understand or foresee. He could not condone or understand the friendliness between the Tartars and the Roumanian shepherd.

But the days passed on. Nothing untoward happened. The Tartars came and went and did not destroy any of the sheep, and the Tartars' dogs guarded their flocks as zealously as Cubak guarded his. There were several bitter fights between the Roumanian dogs, headed by Cubak, and the Tartar dogs. Tudor and his friends always came to the defence of the others. Peace was established between them only when the scent of a wolf was felt. Cubak was the first to signal it. The Tartar dogs united with him to rout the common enemy.

Cubak's uneasiness ceased only when Jancu, accompanied by his bride, on horseback, arrived on the fifth morning after his stay on the grazing field.

'That dog of yours,' said Tudor to Jancu, 'acts as if he were mad,' and he told the story of how Cubak had borne down upon him and how he had refused to go in the direction pointed out to him. Jancu looked at the huge, whining animal

cringing at his feet. And as he looked into his perplexed eyes, he understood quite plainly the reason behind his dog's behaviour.

'He will be much better from now on,' Jancu said, as he shook both Tudor's hands and hugged them. Instantly, the dog, who until then had been morose, began to romp around and emit short little barks of joy, trying to show friendliness toward Tudor. A little later Jancu shook hands with one of the Tartars, and even whistled in a friendly way to one of the Tartar dogs guarding a flock near by. He wanted his dog to understand that even the worst enemy may not be an enemy for ever. Cubak, however, also deduced that the best friend may not remain so for ever.

That night, when the scent of the wolf brought by the wind bit Cubak's nostrils, he was not so anxious to tear the common enemy to pieces; for in his mind there dawned slowly the possibility of his master making friends even with the wolf, who was, after all, only one of the common enemy. Still, he barked loudly, and the other dogs answered, keeping up the whole night the warning to the wolf that they were aware of his presence in the neighbourhood.

As the shepherds were too far away from home, they bought their food from the adjoining Tartar village. Only once every few weeks a boy on horseback would bring them some fresh

cheese and freshly-milled cornmeal. The rest of the food the shepherds bought from the Tartars.

Tudor, who was the youngest of the shepherds, was the one most frequently sent by them to the Tartar village to buy strips of dry meat for the dogs and whatever else was needed in the camp. With that ease and ingenuity of youth, after he had made several trips to the village, he became acquainted with a young Tartar girl. Risa was her name. She was so very different from the girls of his own village! She was short and plump, and the gay pantaloons and the red burnoose she wore were so fetching! From almost a bullet-shaped head shone two black eyes deeply set in their sockets. His hand met hers as he tried to help her carry the water-pail. Their lips parted and smiled at what one said to the other, though neither understood, and they walked near each other when Tudor left the village for his camp. The Tartar girl was proud of that friendship, for she had heard that among the settlements in the neighbourhood there had arisen a new *voevod* in the Dobrudja. That man was Tudor's master, who, after having vanquished the Tartars of the neighbourhood, was now closing friendship with them. And that though this new master was a *ghiaour*, an unbeliever, it was known he was kind to the people he had vanquished; he paid them for the grazing

ground, and did not slay them. And Tudor was that *voevod's* friend.

And so after a little while Risa took to visiting Tudor on the grazing grounds. At night they would sit close to each other on the little mound under which Tudor had scooped his sleeping quarters. Alternately, he would play the Roumanian shepherd songs on his reed flute, and she would sing her Tartar songs and beat the accompaniment on the little dull drum she carried with her wherever she went. And the other shepherds came round, and they all laughed with them, though some thought it was wrong for Tudor to associate with an infidel woman.

Although Cubak's mind had become easy about the strange doings about him, he was not so happy as when his master had been with him. He resented Tudor now not because he grazed his sheep among the Tartars, not because he associated with a woman so unlike the women in his own village, but because he had taken the place of his master. The two men were so different! Tudor looked upon him as a dog, while Jancu had looked upon him as a friend and companion. Whatever time Tudor had to spare, he devoted to his Risa, while whenever Jancu, his real master, had been with him, he had played and chased around with him, in the adjoining forests and fields, providing frolics and fresh meat,

As they moved on to a new grazing place one day, for the sheep had eaten up all the grass in the old one, the flock had spread out a little too far. Cubak began to crowd the sheep together. The younger ones had spread out into wide circles, bleating loudly as they stumbled over themselves. Nibbling at one of the young lambs, the dog sank his teeth a little too far into the tender bone, and the lamb collapsed, bleeding.

Frightened, Cubak looked at Tudor, who was playfully running away from the pursuing young Tartar girl. The dog knew what would happen to him at the hands of this man whom he disliked, whose love he doubted, and who had hurt him several times. Savagely, without much knowing what he did, he sank his teeth into the throat of the young lamb to stop it from bleating. And as the master was some distance from him now, running playfully after Risa, who had taken his gun away, Cubak carried the quivering body of the still pulsating lamb behind the trees of the forest that adjoined the grazing ground. From between the trunks he could watch the shepherd, whose back was to the flock, as he talked and played with the girl.

The warm blood of the lamb was coagulating on the lips and feet of the dog. He sank his teeth again into the dying animal as it moved its feeble legs, and tore its windpipe open. Then forgetting himself completely, forgetting the dog

blood in him, which had been bred for many generations, the wolf blood in him obliterating all the training and breeding, Cubak buried his head into the still palpitating flesh of the lamb, eating ravenously and forgetting completely all that surrounded him, even to his master. And while he ate ravenously the forbidden flesh, the flock was no longer to him something he was there to guard, but something that was to have fear of him. The flock and the master and the other dogs were against him. And although the scent of the wolf came fresh upon the wind, Cubak felt much nearer to him whose scent he felt than to the people and the flock on the other side of the trees. The savage barking of the other dogs did not arouse him, did not draw him nearer to the flock. It made him want to get away beyond the forest, to the other side.

Tudor, having suddenly noted the dog's disappearance, began to call him. The other dogs barked loudly and circled around their flocks. It was getting dark. Tudor, with Risa near him, searching for Cubak, entered the forest, fearing the dog had tried to outdo himself and the others and had gone to meet the enemy all by himself. But they had not gone far when they discovered Cubak, with his head buried in the quivering flesh he was devouring. His muzzle was red with blood up to his eyes.

At sight of Tudor, Cubak withdrew a few

paces and showed his terrible fangs. A second later, however, upon hearing the other dogs bark, all courage left him, and he rolled meekly to the ground, crawling at the feet of his shepherd, moaning as though he wanted to explain himself. Not knowing what to do, Tudor backed out of the forest. The dog followed, crawling low to the ground. The other dogs were still circling widely around the flocks, for the scent of the wolf was becoming stronger and stronger. A moment later a gun was fired in the direction from which appeared a huge brown beast. The tramp of a horse was heard, and Jancu appeared from the opposite direction. Cubak left the pack of dogs now running toward the dead wolf and rushed at full speed toward his beloved master. Jancu bent over his dog to pat him, as was his wont, on the muzzle, and saw the blood on Cubak's head. It had matted the fur around the eyes and neck.

Certain that the wolf was dead, Tudor now approached his master and the dog.

'Come,' he said, 'and I will show you what this dog of yours has just done.'

'Why are his muzzle and his hair red with blood? Has he been in a fight?' Jancu asked wonderingly.

'Come and I will show you,' Tudor answered, walking ahead. 'If he were my dog, I would shoot him.'

Cubak made as if to run away in the other direction when he noticed where Tudor was leading them, but Jancu had already seized him by his collar and half-dragged him to the place of his crime. The young master's eyes welled with tears when he saw the half-devoured lamb on the ground. He looked at it and at Cubak, who stood guiltily near him.

There was only one law for dogs who happened to forget themselves, but Jancu loved Cubak too much. He was sure that if Cubak could speak, he would be able to explain why it had happened.

'Are you sure he did it?' Jancu asked.

Tudor explained how he had come upon Cubak.

'His head was burrowed into the bleeding flesh. He had not responded to my call and to the call of the other dogs when the scent of the wolf came upon the air.'

Jancu pondered a little while. Then he took out the riding-whip he carried in his boot and gave the cringing Cubak, who had backed against the trees, a merciless whipping, while he kept on talking to him and showing him what he had done that deserved such punishment. Thick welts swelled underneath the dog's fur and over his muzzle. The dog howled and cried. Jancu continued plying the whip over his body. When Jancu ceased beating him, the pain burned so that Cubak could hardly move. He understood

that he had committed a terrible crime that deserved that beating. He understood that because he knew his master loved him, because of the great confidence he had in his master's wisdom, even though the consequence of that wisdom was the cause of all that pain in his body. Had Tudor beaten him half as severely, the dog would have turned and torn him with his fangs.

Having punished his dog, Jancu dragged him by the collar back into the woods. He sent Tudor to bury the remains of the lamb deep in the ground so as not to attract beasts of prey around the grazing grounds. And although Jancu had intended to stay only a little while, he remained there until far into the night, tending to his sick, whining dog, bathing his sores in the little creek near by and talking to him. After recommending several things to Tudor, he jumped on his horse, not without a last friendly glance at his whining dog.

'If the wolf blood rises again in that dog of yours, I shall shoot him on the spot,' Tudor said.

'You will do nothing of the kind. I am certain he will never do it again; but if he does it again, tie him to a tree and send for me.'

Cubak wanted to run after Jancu, but the pain in his hind legs was too great.

For several days he limped around. The other shepherds, who had been told of his misdeed,

refused to let him come too near them. Even the Tartar dogs, whom he had ignored ever since he had come there, kept away from him, refusing to befriend one who had so miserably betrayed his flock, one who had behaved as a wolf.

As the summer advanced, and the flock had to move further and further, Tudor began to leave the grounds at night and steal away to the village in which Risa lived. It was too far for her to come to see him frequently, as he wished. At first it was only in the spirit of fun that Tudor had associated with the little Tartar girl, but as time went on, her hold upon him grew so strong that when she absented herself, he was much more a neglected lover than a vigilant shepherd. The other shepherds, who had noticed Tudor's lovesickness when she was not about, jested about it, saying that miracles had come to pass. First, Jancu had overwhelmed the Tartar village, burned their houses, and subdued the men; then he had made peace with them, arranging that the sheep of the Roumanian side of the Dobrudja graze upon that which was undisputed Tartar land. Following that the Tartar dogs and their own had become friendly, and flocked together against the common enemy, the wolf. And now a Roumanian shepherd was waiting for the moon to rise high enough that he might lean against a fence the other side of which lived a Tartar girl.

To all of which Tudor answered that Tartar girls were quite as worthy of love as Tartar ground was worthy of grazing.

At the end of the grazing season, after the sheep had been brought back to the Roumanian village, Tudor returned to the Tartar village to claim Risa as his wife. But Risa's mother, who was a widow, would give her daughter in marriage only on condition that Tudor remained with them; for the Tartars, having lost many men in battle, were eager to have the man that loved one of their daughters stay with them and thus augment the number of males of their tribe. It was rather difficult for Tudor to do so, for even after his village had made peace with the enemy, they were still enemy, nevertheless. Tudor asked for time to consider. Already the shepherds had told at the inns the tale of his friendship with the little Tartar girl. At the dances on Sunday the Roumanian girls walked away when he invited them for a turn. And Lenca, a girl who before that winter had looked upon him with inviting eyes, now refused even to hold his arm, and broke away from him as the whole village danced the hora, circling, locked arm in arm, around the table upon which sat the lone drunken Gipsy fiddler. So half out of spite, half because he longed for Risa, Tudor departed again for the Tartars' village leaving his mother and sisters in tears. It was as if they had buried him. And

Tudor's old mother, in her anger, said aloud in front of the church for everybody to hear:

'Are we to lose one of our sons every year for the handful of grass our sheep may eat?'

For it was clear to her, as to many others, that a man who went over to the Tartars was that much strength lost to their own village.

Cubak turned round idly in the corrals in which the sheep were kept for the winter. The story of his crime, which was known to everybody, had undermined the confidence in him. He was no longer looked upon as the master's dog. People looked askance at him when he entered their yards, as if he were a dubious friend. Only his master showed him the same unbounded confidence that he had shown before. But his master was now so occupied with other duties, and so frequently away from home, attending to the different business of the whole community, answering complaints, making peace between the peasants when they quarrelled, he was seldom free to play with him and show him the attention he craved.

Then as the winter months dragged on, and the cold became more and more severe, the longing for quivering warm flesh of his own kill, the like of which he had tasted the previous summer alone in the forest, came upon Cubak. The memory of the whipping he had received, however, kept him back. He passed over many opportunities to

break into the corral of his own master, but he began to roam stealthily at night around the corrals of the other people, watched by their respective dogs. The dogs themselves began to suspect him; they barked at his approach. Late one night, as he was crawling toward the corral of old Marcu, the dogs began to bark as if they had scented a wolf coming upon them; for Cubak, who for weeks and weeks had prowled with bared fangs and raised hind quarters, was now more like a wolf than a dog. Even his scent was as that of the wolf prowling for a kill. His own brothers did not recognize him, and even Roshka, his mother, rose furiously from her couch at his approach. The whole winter passed without giving Cubak an opportunity to satisfy his desire to kill his own food. The memory of the whipping was no longer so vivid.

Early in the spring Tudor returned to his own village, again to take charge of Jancu's flock. He was dressed in half-Tartar and half-Roumanian costume. Tudor's *mésalliance* had already been forgiven, for the young men and young women of the Roumanian village had listened to what Jancu had had to say on the subject. 'When a man loved a woman, she became beautiful. And it would have been much worse if Tudor had married another woman when he loved the Tartar girl.'

And to show how he felt about it, Jancu entrusted his flocks to Tudor again that spring, although he had originally intended to do otherwise, because he knew Tudor did not like his dog.

The flock had hardly come to the new grazing grounds, after sundown, when Cubak, while his master was boring a hole in the ground for his sleeping quarters, seized one of the young sheep at the throat and dragged it to the adjoining wood, where he tore at it until it lay still. But this time he did not immediately begin to eat it. He waited until his master had crawled into the ground and had fallen asleep. Then he returned to his quarry.

The whole night long Cubak ate the fresh young meat. He did not hear the bark of the other dogs. His own scent was dulled by the smell of the blood underneath his own muzzle. A few nights later, having gone unpunished for his misdeed, Cubak killed another lamb. He ate so much of the fresh kill that his sides bulged and his feet were so heavy he could hardly stand on them. Cubak showed his fangs when the other dogs snarled at his approach, but he ceased snarling when the dog of an adjoining flock had, after creating a terrific rumpus, led his master to the place where Cubak had consumed his second kill in one week. Instantly, the shepherds divined the guilty one. It was easy to see it was he. He slunk away, and kept at a distance from the flock.

'Shoot him,' the other shepherds advised Tudor;

but Risa, who had just arrived, called Tudor aside, and spoke to him softly for a few moments. Tudor then said to the other shepherds:

'It is what I should like to do. Only his master has asked that I send for him in the event of a similar occurrence.'

A young Tartar boy was dispatched to call Jancu, but before the master arrived, the Tartar woman had carried away to her village two young sheep that Tudor had slaughtered for her while the other shepherds were busy.

'You will tell him the dog has eaten them,' Risa advised.

'What is it you call me for?' Jancu asked upon his arrival.

'That dog of yours is worse than a wolf,' said Tudor. 'Marcu and the others will bear me witness. He has again killed sheep from our flock. It is as if we had a wolf guarding our sheep.'

The greatest misfortune could not have caused Jancu to suffer so much as he did when hearing those words.

'If I have not shot him,' Tudor continued, 'it was because I remembered what you said last year when I urged you to do so.'

Jancu seized the handle of the pistol he carried in his belt. Cubak lay at his feet, looking up. The young master looked into his eyes, and recalled the dog as he had taken him away from

under his mother, a puppy only a few weeks old; how he had played with him, reared him; how the two had been friends for so long; how they had battled against the Tartars; how each of them had been wounded watching the flock. He remembered the fight, after invading the Tartar village, which Jancu engaged in just to regain the confidence of his dog, having lost it when the Tartars had defeated him before that. The dog had been all to him, brother, friend, inspiration. If only the dog could speak, perhaps he could explain. He did not have the heart to kill him. He could not ask anybody else to do that. He was going to speak to the dog in the only language he could understand. He tied a rope to Cubak's collar and the other end to a tree. Then, showing him the remains of the killed lambs, the bones and fleece, he began to whip him. At first Cubak took the beating whining and crying; then, as the master did not cease, and the pain increased, he began to show his fangs. It made Jancu furious. Turning round and round, jumping and trying to protect one side and then the other, and chewing at the rope which held him tight, Cubak snarled and tried either to free himself or destroy his tormentor, who stood before him with the terrible whip that he plied so mercilessly over his body. Then as the pain increased and his legs gave way under him, he began to whine and beg and cry. Jancu still kept on whipping him. He ceased

only when Cubak was half dead. His parched tongue was lolling out of his mouth. His swollen body was heaving like a bellows.

When the dog opened his eyes after several pails of water had been dashed over his burning body, he saw his master still near him. A sickening sensation passed through Jancu when he saw his dog in such pain. He dragged him to the little river near by and immersed his body in the water. Before nightfall he placed the sick Cubak on a cart covered with straw and brought him home, sending another dog meanwhile to take his place with the sheep.

The whole summer Cubak lay in terrible agony, but he was attended by his master. His body was so full of sores that the fur fell out in large patches. He grew thinner day by day. Indeed, so weak had he become that he lacked strength even to whine. And when the master salved the sores, the raw body quivered and stretched and trembled like jelly.

Nobody approached the dog all through that summer except the master. He would drag him out of the kennel and place him where the sun was warmest, sit near him for a while, feed him bread and milk, attend to his wounds, cover him to protect him from flies and other insects, and then leave him there until nightfall, when he would put him back into his kennel.

As the dog came to himself, recovering slowly

from the worst beating a dog had ever received at the hands of a master, he also realized the cause of his plight. The mere memory of the killing and what followed after sickened him. And though he feared his master, remembering the beating, he also realized that the master had whipped him for something he had done the like of which one expected of a wolf or used to expect of a Tartar. For he had committed a sin against the flock, against the holy flock. And he wondered why. The very sight of a lamb drove fear into Cubak's bones now.

When the summer had come to an end, and before the first snowfall, the sheep were brought home again. Cubak was strong enough to walk about the yard. He met Tudor, who returned with the flock to Jancu, with bared fangs. At the sight of the shepherd, he suddenly remembered how the man himself had killed two sheep and given them to the Tartar woman. Why was he not whipped? Why did the master shake that man's hand and embrace him?

'Did you ever hit the dog?' Jancu asked, as he saw Cubak trying to get at Tudor. Cubak, who had been very meek until then, now was suddenly displaying terrific animosity with the little strength he had just regained.

'No, I never did,' Tudor replied.

As they spoke, Risa, who had accompanied her husband, joined them. Cubak flew at her, not to

hurt her, but because of something he wanted to tell his master about the two. And the master understood. He understood his dog wanted him to know that the two of them had sinned against the flock.

They counted the sheep as they let them in one by one through the gate of the corral. They were a good many short. As was the custom, every time a lamb died or was destroyed by a beast of prey, the other shepherds of the neighbourhood, when the owner was not the one who grazed them, would testify about it. Tudor had such testimony about four sheep that had died that season. The other five that were missing were attributed to Cubak. Jancu could not help looking at his dog when Tudor made mention of that.

'How long are you going to keep a wolf to guard your sheep?' Tudor asked sarcastically.

Half in defence of his own dog and half because he believed it to be so, Jancu said:

'You cannot tell me that this dog could have eaten those five lambs in one week.'

Tudor, resenting the insult, threw himself upon his former friend and present master. The other shepherds intervened before the men had drawn their knives. The dog was too weak to fight on his master's side. He was still limping on his right fore leg and left hind leg. He whined and barked as he danced about them.

Jancu shook himself together. In his capacity

as magistrate of the village he called himself and the other men to court immediately. The whole village followed, wondering what the procedure would be. Jancu had them all sit down upon the benches in the assembly-room; then he called Tudor and asked him to tell his side of the story. He listened to the other shepherds' explanations of what had happened. After sitting through it all, Jancu pronounced judgment upon himself for having insulted a man, calling him thief when he had no proof other than his own feeling and his knowledge that no dog could eat five lambs in one week. And so in punishment for his haste, Jancu condemned himself to five of the best sheep Tudor might choose to take from his flock.

In vain did Tudor, who, after a year of living with the lawless Tartars, now felt his inborn honesty come to the fore, protest and say that he had forgiven the insult. Jancu maintained that he wanted to punish whoever grievously insulted an honest man. When it came to taking the sheep, Tudor broke down in the presence of most of the people of his village, in the presence of the *Popa* and the school-teacher, and declared himself guilty of having killed three of the five sheep at the instigation of his wife. The men went over to the weeping Tudor, hugged and kissed him, and asked him to remain with them at the *sfat*, council hour, of the village. After many *sfat*

hours it was decreed that Tartars are Tartars; that because of a remote ancestor in Tudor's own lineage, it was not safe for him to live among Tartars; that his wife could either stay among them or she was free to go wherever she desired. His wife chose to remain.

The whole winter long Jancu and his wife, for he had married Veta in Christmas week, attended to the sick dog. As his fur had almost all fallen out, they did not allow him out of doors in the bitter cold. Cubak's own sons had grown big enough to watch the flock in the corrals. Meanwhile his fur was allowed to grow over the healed wounds. Playing with his master, the dog regained his strength little by little and also his gaiety and cheerfulness. With the arrival of spring, though his fur was still thin and patches of bare brown skin showed themselves here and there where the fur had not yet grown, Jancu thought him well enough to send him out again with Tudor and his flock.

It was not thought desirable to graze over the Tartar border. A new quarrel had arisen between the Roumanians and the Tartars because of Risa's leaving her tribe contrary to the original arrangement between Tudor and the woman's mother. Old Bujor, Jancu's father, came to see his son before the flock left.

'It is better to leave Cubak at home this time the old man argued.

'No,' Jancu answered, 'it is better that he be shown all confidence. I have pondered over the matter and I am convinced he was demoralized because we had sent our flock among the Tartars. I may be as guilty of what he did as if I myself had committed his crimes. First, we teach him to hate Tartars and then to be friends with them. He did not understand. It demoralized him.'

'It is your flock. It is your dog. You know best,' the old man replied.

Out in the open, with his strength regained, Cubak, on his own grazing grounds, recovered his former self very soon. But it was not long before the old desire to kill his own meat crept upon him. He fought against the wolfish blood in him for some time. The memory of the last beating haunted him every time he prowled about the young sheep at night. Tudor, who had not been convinced of Cubak's recovered honesty, was continually on the alert; for he was afraid that he would need more than one witness before he could convince the people of his own honesty.

Tudor's lack of confidence and continued watchfulness aroused in Cubak another feeling just as dangerous as that aroused by the wolfish blood in him — the desire to outwit the shepherd. Spurred on by the other's watchfulness, Cubak, as the memory of the beating receded, allowed himself

to be gripped by all the savage instinct dormant in him, all the generations of hunters of fresh flesh from whom he descended. No other food agreed with him; bread and strips of dry meat thrown to him remained untouched. He became leaner every day. His ribs showed like those of a starved wolf. Slinking about, his fore legs lowered so that his hind quarters were continually arched ready for the killing, he prowled about, waiting for a chance. His mouth was continually open, the red tongue was hanging loosely on one side, the fangs were bare, and his eyes became more and more lustrous and furtive.

Tudor became so worried that he was tempted to send for Jancu, but the pride of the shepherd stayed him. He spoke to the other shepherds of the change in the dog, but they shook their heads. It was not just to suspect one, be it even a dog, because of a previous sin.

'He may only be sick, as dogs sometimes are. He may have eaten certain grasses which do not agree with him,' the oldest of the shepherds advised.

But Tudor knew better and watched. And, lo! one day Cubak, unable to withstand the torture any longer, seized in broad daylight one of the sheep and dragged it away with him into the forest. At the cry of Tudor, the other shepherds came running after the malefactor. They were not going to wait for Jancu's judgment now. The

dog who could do that was a wolf, and they would have to protect their own sheep. Three guns spoke almost simultaneously.

Having had one tear at the throat of the lamb, Cubak disappeared into the forest, the shepherds running after him and emptying their guns. After Cubak had disappeared, the shepherds returned to their flocks. A boy was sent to Jancu with a message of what had happened, requesting him also that he send another dog to replace the renegade.

A quarter of a moon Cubak ran about the fields and the forest. He was happy to have saved himself from another beating he was certain to receive. He roamed over other people's chicken yards, fed himself upon freshly killed rabbits and forest fowl.

But after he had his fill of food, he was chased with stones by the peasant women. Sticks were thrown at him by children guarding the geese he attacked. He was even shot at several times. Everybody treated him as if he were one of the curs of the Tartar village. He began to long for his master; not the one who was now guarding the sheep, but the real master who had beaten him twice and then taken care of him, keeping him covered and warm, feeding him in his own house and keeping him indoors while the other dogs were outside in the cold snow. He knew

that his master would beat him again as mercilessly as he had done before, but he longed for his master again, longed for the touch of his master's hand after the beating.

And so one morning Jancu was taken completely by surprise to find Cubak lying on his back, with his feet pawing the air, whining and crying at his door. The report that had been given to Jancu about his dog's behaviour was so explicit that there remained nothing but to shoot the dog. Yet he could not do that. As for whipping him, the young shepherd, with his knowledge of dogs, thought that also unnecessary – unnecessary because it was futile. He could not beat a dog more than he had already done the previous year. And if that had not been sufficient, there was no use repeating it. He also knew he would not care to nurse the dog after the beating as he had done twice before. So while Cubak was rolling at his feet, expecting punishment, Jancu kicked him with disgust, spat at him, and walked off. Cubak had closed his eyes, waiting for the strokes of the rawhide whip. When they did not come, he opened his eyes and looked around. His master had gone. He turned on his feet and ran after him. But when he approached his master he was kicked out of the way. Cubak could not understand. He had expected a beating as severe as the one he had received before, but now his master was treating him as strangers had. Had he lost

his master? He made another attempt to stay near Jancu, throwing himself playfully upon him. Jancu kicked him aside again, bent to the ground to pick up a stone, and chased him away from the house, from the home, from the kennel.

The whole day Cubak remained at the gate of the village's council-house, waiting for his master's return. He waited to be beaten, he wanted to be punished for his crime, certain he would be forgiven afterward and enjoy again his master's love. But his master would not even look at him. He threatened him with a stick. Yet when Cubak came near, expecting blows to rain upon him, happy to receive punishment, the master merely shoved him away and spat at him.

And then it dawned on the dog that his crime was so great there was no punishment great enough to equal it and that that was the reason his master scorned him. And above all things that dawned upon his groping mind Cubak realized he had lost his master for ever, that he was like a cur. He waited until it was dark; then he crawled into his kennel to lie down on the little mound of straw. His body ached and pained. For days and days he lay there without uttering a sound, without giving a sign of his presence. Then with the last strength in him he crawled out, dragging himself to his master's door, whining, crying. It was not forgiveness that he wanted. He wanted punishment and the

forgiveness that came after, the master's hand, the master's touch. But the master would not even look at him. Broken, as if all strength had suddenly left his limbs, Cubak crawled back to his hiding-place.

And so every morning, growing thinner and thinner from lack of food and warmth, growing weaker, with just his hide covering his bones, less able to move or drag himself about on his haunches than after he had been mercilessly beaten the previous year, he pulled himself together to crawl to the door, whining, crying, begging for the punishment he deserved.

At last Bujor, Jancu's father, who had been watching the dog from his window, spoke to his son.

'Forgive him before he dies.'

The dog was lying down, breathing slowly. The sorrow in his eyes was so great that Jancu's own eyes filled with tears. He knelt down near him, and as of old he passed his palm over Cubak's spine.

'Give me some milk,' Jancu asked of his wife. Then opening Cubak's mouth, he poured into it the nourishment and sat down to watch the death of his dog. But it was not death that came, but life that returned.

And before long Jancu himself brought Cubak back to the flock. To the cry of Tudor and the other shepherds he replied:

'And if ever he touches a lamb again, shoot me. That much faith have I in Cubak now.'

'But,' argued Tudor, 'who has done it once -'
'Will not do it again,' continued Jancu, putting his arm around Tudor's neck, and looking straight into Tudor's eyes, 'after he has understood what it will cost him.'

And Tudor and Jancu cried, leaning against each other, while Cubak looked on.

Revenge

I

I FIRST met Aristides Simonides in the Latin Quarter of Paris. We were of the same age, twenty. Life, as I looked upon it, was but a bridge, an escalator. I was on one of the steps and going upward. There was the usual afternoon talk with friends in the Café de la Belle Etoile, where all things were discussed while we drank black coffee and light wines. Everything from the latest in music and literature to the fall of the ministerial cabinet passed in review under our youthful analysis. Then before night fell each one brought his *petite amie* and returned, locked arm in arm, marching in step to the rhythm of a new poem or the melody of a street song.

We were a noisy lot, and our women companions, since become famous the world over in all branches of the arts, were as noisy as we. In groups of twenty or more nightly we invaded the peaceful streets of the neighbourhood and serenaded loudly and long until some young head framed itself in a window. We were not particular as to whom the head belonged. It was our nightly lark. We called that 'making love to the world at large.' The neighbourhood as a whole never objected to our noise. Even the policeman looked on with amusement. 'Young students; they amuse themselves.'

We were an international group. All the nations were represented; all the nations and all the continents. We studied hard at times, but we played harder than we studied. We followed our own curriculum, the curriculum of youth, the noisy, wise, happy youth of Paris.

I said 'we.' 'We' is all too inclusive. The exception was the Greek student, Aristides Simonides. He was handsome; 'the Greek god' we called him. Tall, lithe, straight, he followed wherever we went, but never actually took part in any of our games and frolics. He listened to our singing, but did not sing. He accompanied us in our nightly larks, but did not lark. His pale face never showed the slightest emotion. His movements were slow, but precise, and his gestures measured. To one who did not know his great strength he appeared like a man just out of a hospital, recuperating from a serious illness.

After the second bock, we acted as we should have acted after the twentieth, had any of us had money enough to drink so many. We anticipated the effect of the twentieth. We gambled a little. Not for gain; just for the excitement. If one won or lost ten cents at the end of a gambling session, his sensations were akin to his who had lost or won a fortune. Not so Simonides, win or lose. It was all the same to him. He derived no pleasure from beer or gambling; neither gave him any thrill. He was dead to all that. Having

all pleasures at his disposal, he had no joy in life.

We all hoped great things. We had ambitions. We desired to shine, to outshine one another, to glorify our families, to burn our names in big deep letters upon the pages of history. Our parents were simple mortals; we wanted to become immortal. Our families were poor; we wanted to become rich. Those born in huts battled and worked to die in palaces, mourned by the whole world, brought to the grave with the fanfare of trumpets and the pomp of state.

But Simonides! He was a descendant of one of Greece's oldest houses. The race of Simonides had already produced great poets, great musicians, great statesmen, and great warriors. Great riches were also theirs. There was not a single honour that could come to Aristides Simonides that one of his ancestors had not already received; not a single thing money could buy that Aristides had ever been denied. Every thrill life held as a promise to us was already buried in his past. Instead of hopes he had memories, traditions. We were the seed of the future; he was the fruit of a rich past.

Born on a beautiful river that traverses the plains of the fertile province of Thessaly, Aristides Simonides had travelled extensively. His mother promenaded her son and her ennui through all the capitals of the world. He had seen all the great

museums of the world. He had heard all the great musicians and watched from very near the most celebrated actresses and singers. The Simonides owned a palace on the Bosphorus, a mansion in London, the palace of some old doge in Venice, and their home on the Boulevard St.-Germain was the show-place of the avenue of the French nobility.

When Aristides was eighteen, his father decided to enter politics in Athens. The boy was left to live in the Paris mansion in charge of a dozen servants and cooks. But he chose to live in a hotel not far from the Luxembourg gardens. He chose to live among us, amused by our aspiration and vivacity.

He drew a little closer to me; we were almost friends. Perhaps because I could speak his mother tongue? Or because I understood him better? One day Aristides inquired:

'How about passing your vacation in Greece as my guest?' There was nothing on earth I desired more, and I told him so. I had already visited Greece before, and longed to see again the placid, oily waters of the Ionian Sea, the dark, stretching greensward of the hills, thick with olive-groves.

'So it's understood,' he answered. 'When school is over, you go with me to Athens.'

The next few weeks I lived on wings. But a month passed, another month, and Simonides

never repeated his invitation. Too proud to inquire, I was sure that the plan had somehow fallen through. Then one early morning Aristides suddenly asked:

'Have you made the necessary preparations for your voyage? We leave Monday of next week. We take the boat at Marseilles. I have made reservations on the train, a special compartment. From Marseilles we leave on a boat going more or less directly to Piræus. I have written home that they put a piano in one of your rooms, so that you may be able to practise. Get ready, Adelpheos.'

It was a great surprise. I had given up hope of the voyage. Preparations were the least difficult matter; a corduroy suit, a few other things, a dozen books, a music-bag, and a cane were all I possessed. I had studied on an allowance of sixty francs a month. One could not buy any luxuries with that sum.

On the morning we were to leave Paris I met him, as we had previously agreed, at his home on the Boulevard St.-Germain. When we arrived at the railway station four of his servants were checking trunks and attending to the innumerable details of travel. One servant was to accompany him and see to his comfort, and another was to look after me. 'He will be your man, English fashion,' Aristides explained.

It humbled me when the black-frocked old valet

took charge of the frayed little satchel containing all my worldly goods.

'Aristides,' I said, 'do you think I was born a millionaire? I was born in corduroys.'

He laughed, and slapped me on the shoulder.

'The Simonides don't care for such things. Don't bother. All will be well.'

My *belle* was at the railroad station. She excused herself from work in a near-by millinery shop to see me off, if she could not persuade me to remain. For even at the station, a minute before the last bell, Mimi, the golden-haired little *midinette*, tried to persuade me not to leave Paris for that 'heathen country,' so far away from the Luxembourg, the Louvre, the creameries, and her lips. All I could do was to promise to come back to her. I also promised other things, and had her make promises which I doubted she could keep, before I tore myself away from her. Simonides, who was smilingly observing our leave-taking, had called out that the train was leaving. His *amie* had not come to see him off, but he did not care. He had no strong attachment for anybody or anything. He watched me as I put my head through the window when the train departed. I saw tears in his eyes when I sat down finally and exclaimed, putting aside the handkerchief I had waved: 'She can't see me any more.'

'What a happy man you are!' he said, with the air of one who was old.

Two days later we were in Marseilles. I had by that time, as if to the manner born, become accustomed to 'my man.' One is so adaptable to new forms when young! The boat for Piræus was delayed twenty-four hours. I took advantage of the delay to roam through the port of Marseilles, to fill my nostrils with the scent of fried oil and heavy wine, the sweetish odour of packed figs and dates in burlap bags on the pavement of the wharves, and to inhale the spicy smells of tar, rope, and rubber, the symphony of odours dear to one born on a waterfront. It made me so communicative, so exuberant, that 'my man' became alarmed, hired a taxi, and brought me almost forcibly back to the hotel. I was tremendously amused when we returned. My man was apologetic, but he argued that Marseilles was a wicked city, and he was responsible for me to his master.

A suite of rooms had been engaged in advance for each of us. I tried to amuse myself and my host, but Aristides was bored. The fact that he was returning home or the voyage did not mean anything to him. The only thing he complained of, and it was the first time I had heard him complain, was that he had lost his favourite cigarette-holder on the train. His servant was sent to buy him a dozen new ones. Aristides looked them over, tried them, and threw them out of the win-

dow. None would do so well as that which he had lost; so he told the servant to telegraph to the station-master, asking him to institute search for the little wooden cigarette-holder.

Early the following morning we boarded the steamer. A new surprise for me; it was one of Aristides' father's passenger-boats, the last word in travelling luxury. Of course we were given the best cabins. There were other passengers on deck, but because of the deference shown to us by the captain and the crew, no one attempted to make our acquaintance, though I was still in my old corduroy suit. I gathered that one of the crew had given out a statement that we were *Alteses* travelling incognito. Even my advances were respectfully declined. Aristides laughed when I complained.

'You see how clothes do not matter? Reputation is all that counts. Just try their conversation now. It will bore you to death.' He was himself not a very cheerful companion.

For four days our boat cleaved through a glassy sea. The sky was so uniformly blue that it looked more like a theatrical background of a musical comedy than a living horizon. As we approached the Ionian Sea, the calm became even more stagnant. When within sight of Piræus, the port of Greece's capital, our boat seemed to glide upon a sea of thick, transparent oil. Not a single wave ever split as we cleaved through. The thick,

dark-brown liquid undulated in huge glassy sheets, which mirrored the shimmering shapes and colours of inverted ships lying on the shore, and the towers of the distant tall buildings. The sea rocked the fantastic mirage. The inversely mirrored boats and towers swayed, curved, and returned to position; the domes of churches and houses pointed deep into the water, as if suspended from invisible chains somewhere in the air.

A launch detached itself from the distant wharf and ploughed through the sea toward our boat. It took Aristides and me to the shore. In less than an hour we were at the wharf, where a splendid equipage, drawn by four magnificent black stallions, was waiting for us. The servants remained behind to attend to our trunks. Aristides slowly opened a letter the liveried coachman had handed to him, read it, refolded it neatly, and said, with just a hint of disappointment in his voice:

'Father could not come to meet us. He is in Thessaly. Elections, you know. Oh, did I ever tell you I have no mother? She died two years ago. I should have told you, I think.'

The Simonides' palace in Athens was all I expected, and more. Wealth and good taste had for generations combined to build a house which internally and externally had no equal anywhere. The architecture was of the purest Byzantine,

The interior echoed back to the last stages of Neo-Egyptian culture; to the Alexandria of the days of Hypatia, when paganism, vanquished, strangled, with the reflex movements of a dying eagle's flapping wings, was gasping away the last breaths of life. I did not feel humbled because of my modest corduroys. I had not time to think or brood about myself. There were too many new interests absorbing me, and I was only too willing to merge in the new surroundings. With Aristides acting as guide, I visited the ancient temples and monuments of the district. Every day was a holiday. On donkey-back we made excursions to the distant green mountains, thick with huge fig-trees. Between groves of oranges and lemons played tame mountain-goats, mules, ewes with their lambs, and deer-limbed little horses.

'To-morrow we shall get ready for a trip to Alexandria,' said Aristides one day. 'You must see Alexandria before my father returns from Thessaly. When he comes back, he will take possession of you to explain everything in detail. He affects pride in his art treasures, just as he affects political ambition. He has neither of them, the dear old man. It's affectation. We Simonides have lived all our lives in the past. You are a lucky man. You still expect something, hope for something. Father contents himself, makes believe he does, with his affectation of art and politics. I haven't even that,' he declared. His

eyes were moist with the sadness of his own life.

Strange, but I was most of the time absolutely unaware of Aristides' existence. Since he desired nothing, enjoyed nothing, and missed nothing, as a personality he ceased to exist for me. Knowing from which angle he looked at things and life, I always knew beforehand what he was going to say. When he kept quiet, I was grateful. It was as satisfactory as the harmony of non-existing dissonance. His very positiveness was to me as negative as static atmosphere on a grey summer morning.

When all the details for our trip to Alexandria had been attended to, a small package reached Aristides from Marseilles. It was the lost cigarette-holder. I expected him to show some emotion. He had been so troubled when he missed it, he surely would be happy to find his favourite holder again. Nonchalantly, he asked his valet to open the package, stuck a cigarette in the retrieved holder, and continued an interrupted conversation without the slightest show of emotion. That same day he had also received a letter from his *amie*. He did not even open the envelope. It annoyed me so that I could not withhold the remark:

'You are made of wood, Aristides!'

'I am old,' he answered slowly, but without hesitation, in the ghostlike, colourless voice he affected most of the time.

An hour later, just as we were descending the broad staircase to enter the waiting carriage, a telegram was handed to Aristides by one of the servants. Standing with one foot on the carriage-step and the other on the wide granite step, cigarette-holder between his thin lips, he opened it slowly, after looking at the stamp for its origin.

'It's from Thessaly,' he said. 'My father is probably announcing his home-coming.'

A second later, as he read the telegram, he paled, and gave a loud cry, crushing the bluish piece of paper in his upraised fist. The high-strung horses pranced and rose on their hind legs. In less than a minute many servants were about us, hats in hands, at a respectful distance.

'My father has been killed by a political enemy!' Aristides said as he turned toward me. 'You can go alone to Egypt. The guide will attend to all the details. I must go to Thessaly for revenge.'

His voice startled me. It was full and round. I looked at him closely. In less than a minute he had changed from a tired boy into a passionate man. His eyes, which had looked like a quiet pool, now sprayed and radiated like a boiling sea. His face was a deep red. His movements were jerky, and his voice was husky in its impatience.

I refused to go alone to Alexandria, deciding instead to return to Paris, unless he needed me or wanted me to help him. He laughed nervously.

'Need you? My God, no! I shall hunt for Termandre all alone. It's my revenge! Why should I share such joy with anybody?'

He rushed up the steps again and closed himself up in one of the rooms. I heard him crying, laughing, singing as I packed my belongings. The sudden change was so unusual that it made me uneasy. I knocked at his door and entered the room even before I had received an invitation. He acted like a raving maniac.

'Termandre! Termandre!' he cried over and over again. 'So you have done it, ha?' Then turning to me, he said: 'Oh, you do not know what a man Termandre is! He is a descendant of that other Termandre, the great Hellenic poet. He is of noble blood, and he is crafty and clever. I shall have to hunt for him for years. But I am a Simonides. To the end of the earth, to the last of my days, I shall do nothing else; I shall think of nothing else but hunting him down. Ah, revenge! Oh, now I understand you! Now I understand all your other friends. I, too, have something before me now. I, too, have something to live for — Termandre! Termandre! I have to avenge my father's death.'

Aristides pronounced the name with great hatred.

'I hope you find him soon,' I stammered before leaving the room.

'Soon? Why? Oh, you don't understand. You

don't understand. Leave me alone. How deep the chasm between us! He is a Termandre. He knows I am a Simonides. It will take years and years.'

3

The '*Simonides*', the boat on which we came, was leaving that night for Marseilles. I embarked on it. Four days later I was at Mimi's door. She was very happy to see me back.

'I knew you would not stay away from me very long,' she cried, holding my hand as we swung ourselves toward the Boulevard St.-Michel. Not caring to disillusion her, I said nothing about the death of the old Simonides. I was twenty, Mimi was beautiful, and she loved me.

Paris! Paris! The Mediterranean, the Adriatic, Piræus, Athens, the gorgeous home of Aristides, the green mountains, the old monuments, even the frustrated excursion to Alexandria, including the fateful telegram, were soon forgotten. Paris! Mimi! I tramped the hot streets with her. I sang serenades at unknown windows. The great city had become dearer to me than ever. I had no worry, no care. I was sure of myself, I was in splendid health. New poems were read aloud by poets in cafés; new songs were sung in the streets. The Dreyfus Affair was on; there was plenty of controversy, of excitement; one ministerial cabinet fell after the other. And I had six weeks

of freedom, before the beginning of the school year.

One evening as we were making merry Aristides Simonides, joyous and light-hearted as we had never seen him before, suddenly appeared among us. He outshouted and outjoked us all. He seemed to have grown much younger. His eyes were sparkling with devilry; his lips were humid and loose, and he was alert of step.

'So you are here!' He extended his hands, and we embraced.

'Look at Simonides!' one of the young women called as she left her table and went over to him. 'Let's make sure it's Aristides and not his happy ghost.' She touched his arms to make sure he was alive. Aristides planted a kiss upon her cheek. '*Mes amis*,' the girl yelled, 'is it possible? Aristides has kissed me! Is it a dream or not?'

The young women approached Aristides to assure themselves they were not dreaming, and he kissed each one of them. I felt certain I knew what had accomplished the miracle. He had found Termandre and avenged the death of his father, I said to myself. We drank wine and danced until the wee hours of the morning. Aristides and I walked home together. He was very enthusiastic about one of the women.

'I had never noticed before how beautiful she is,' he exclaimed. 'She has adorable eyes, and a mouth as fresh and cool as a rose in the morning.'

'Where did you find Termandre, and when did it happen?' I inquired as soon as he gave me a chance to talk. 'Tell me; I am dying to hear the story.'

'What? About whom are you speaking?' Aristides turned on me with astonishment.

'About Termandre, Aristides. You have killed him, have you not?'

'Oh, no, I have not found him yet. No, no, not yet. It will take years, years. He is a Termandre, of old stock, clever, wealthy. What do you think he is? A lamb, a kitten? My dear, it isn't as easy as all that, thank God! Don't you remember your Greek poets at all? The first Termandre wrote great poetry. There has always been rivalry between the genius of their blood and ours. Did you think he was a truck horse, to be coralled at will and put to harness? Or an ox to be slaughtered at will? Did you think a Termandre was a kitten? He is a tiger, a wild tiger. It takes time to track such a wild animal. But what game! What sport to hunt down a tiger who watches his chance to spring at you! He knows I am on his tracks. He has had me followed and is posted daily as to my whereabouts. I am sure of that. That's what I would have done were I in his place. I know he is in Rome hiding in one of his villas. I chartered a special train to make believe I thought he was in Paris. It will take years, years, but I shall get him. Oh, what sport! That's why

I am so alive. Now only do I feel what it means to live. To live is to hunt. Strong men hunt big game, have great ambitions, choose high peaks, and climb to the top. Weaklings are satisfied with hilltops or to sit on the mounds.'

He spoke with the same fervour that some of us used in discussions about a future *début* on the concert platform, the first appearance in a great rôle, the first book of poems, or when planning a great novel. So now Aristides, too, had something to live for. His life was not flickering out, like the remnant of a wick in a spluttering candle, in memories of the remote past. There was bright hope in its light. It even seemed to me that he did not much regret the death of his father. Somewhere in his mind lurked the idea that his father had died to offer him an object in life. Old Simonides' death was certainly more valuable to his son than his life had been.

But what a change in Aristides! What a complete change! In another two days he had swept a young lady off her feet and was busy making other conquests. On the terrace of the *brasserie* he recited extempore translations of old Greek poetry, never forgetting to include at least one poem of the older Termandre.

One day I found him busily engaged in his library writing an ode to the whole Termandre race. He recited it in Greek that evening. He exaggerated the value of the Termandres, as a

hunter exaggerates to himself the size and cunning of the animal he is hunting.

'What has happened to Simonides?' every one asked. 'Look at him, with one arm around the waist of a girl and making love to a grisette sitting across the table. He is almost human. And the way he fights with the waiters! He gambles, too, and gets excited when he loses and when he wins!' Some even believed he cheated when he played.

There was a young woman of our group who had formerly tried in vain to attract his attention. Now he was so jealous of her that he fought the young men who were courting her. When he was not carousing, Aristides worked, writing a history of the Termandre family, from the first great poet to the last of the race. Perhaps no greater eulogy of a family was ever written. He translated it for us from the original manuscript.

About a month after his return to Paris, Aristides Simonides, standing upon a table in the Café de la Belle Etoile, was leading the chorus of a new song. The whole café was singing with him. A bottle of wine in one hand, a glass in the other, he waved his arms in broad sweeps, urging and encouraging the timid ones to raise their voices, to give themselves more completely to the singing of the song.

He was irresistible. The chorus of the song was repeated again and again by the young people surrounding him. They slurred over the last and

the first words of the chorus in perpetual-motion fashion, as if there were no end to the song.

The doors of the café opened wide toward the boulevard and the terrace, and habitués and passers-by, attracted by the gaiety, forced their way into the place, and were submerged in the whirlpool of energy of which Aristides Simonides was the centre.

His *belle* had climbed upon the table and stood near him. A few other *belles*, not to be outdone, did the same thing. It vitalized the whole *brasserie*. The waiters and the managers looked on stupefied. It was a rare sight even for them, and they had witnessed many a spontaneous student affair of this sort.

The singing continued for more than an hour, when Aristides's arms suddenly became rigid, remaining upraised, his body crouched forward, and his eyes dilated. A horrible grin changed the happy expression of his face into one of beastly savagery. During the sudden silence that followed two shrieks were heard. One from Aristides, who jumped down from the table, and one from a cowering, grey-bearded man, so horror-stricken that he seemed paralysed. Instantly, a path was opened between the two.

As Aristides approached him, the old man's knees collapsed, and he fell into a heap, a moaning mass of flesh. Simonides, still disfigured by that horrible grin, a dagger in one uplifted hand, stood

over the old man and shrieked wildly in his native tongue.

No one interfered. For a while Simonides stood over the prostrate man, who writhed on the floor like a worm. But suddenly his own body shook in convulsions, the dagger fell from his hand, and he collapsed into a near-by chair, as pale and haggard as though death and decomposition had already set in.

From the writhing mass on the floor two eyes peered and watched the collapsed man in the chair. Then the old man, still like a snake, rolled himself away a little distance, and slowly and cautiously scrambled to his feet. Instantly, Aristides jumped up, dagger flashing in his hand. The old man again threw himself upon the floor, and again Aristides collapsed. Then he turned his back on the old man, yelling:

'Disappear, or I shall become a coward, as you are!'

As quick as a flash, the old man disappeared into the crowd. Some one offered a glass of water to the young Greek.

'It is all over now,' he said to me when I approached him. 'That was Termandre. That heap of flesh writhing on the floor like a worm was the enemy I pursued. And I thought I was hunting a tiger, a wild tiger!' he mourned, shaking his head from side to side.

And in that minute he again became the old, in-

different, cold Aristides, with no interest in life, the passion in his eyes extinguished; and it seemed to me that even his glossy black hair became dull and lifeless.

The following day the Parisian papers spoke about the suicide of a young Athenian, and I came into the possession of the history of the Termandre family, whose tigerish and fighting qualities were specially emphasized by the man who wrote it.

Wolves

THIS is the story of Lica, the man wolf, the brigand who had spread terror about the valleys that lie like wooded saucers at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains. The old district of Oltu, where the first soldiers of the Emperor Trajan had settled down two thousand years ago, had never known bandit more audacious, more pitiless.

And it is also the story of Cornel, the gipsy fiddler, whose hut was so close to the river Oltu that he had a rowing boat moored at the wall to travel up and down and across the river, to play at the festivals, the weddings and funerals, the christenings and dances at the churches and inns of the neighbourhood. Of old Cornel the peasants said that he never played for money, only for the pleasure of giving pleasure. That which was given him at the end of every festival, and given liberally of gold and silver, was given him so that he might live till the next wedding or dance. And they wanted Cornel to live well. The tall young men in their tight, snow-white trousers, over which hung a wide-sleeved homespun shirt embroidered with yellow and black at the neck, and girded by a large red sash – the men loved to dance with the sandalled maidens, whose tasselled, green skirts spread and circled as they whirled and turned to Cornel's dance tunes. The gipsy made their limbs sing.

And so that you may understand the story of Lica better, I shall have also to tell the story of Herta, Cornel's dark-eyed, soft-voiced, black-haired daughter. Of Herta people said that her face was like the young moon framed by a dark night. And yet she was so sweet it was a wonder bees did not mistake her for a flower. There were many young men who desired her as wife, but she seemed so distant from earthly desires that the most forward one dared not ask her to marry him. Speaking of her, the older women of the village said her ears were always tuned to hear the call of some one far away.

And I shall also have to tell why the country was for years ravaged by wolves. Cornel and his daughter were guilty of all that the beasts destroyed. Kind people are frequently the cause of great misfortunes.

Cornel believed that killing animals, even for food, was criminal, and because of this belief he and his daughter lived only on what the soil produced, never eating any animal food.

One day, after a wolf hunt, while the happy peasants were celebrating, drinking foaming red wine from green clay cups, Cornel mused that the men who had killed some forty beasts had not done the right thing. He looked with sadness at the heap of thick-furred, silver-brown carcasses, and argued with Papa Tanase, the priest of the village, that wolves were also not so cruel and

dangerous as men made them out to be. Wolves were also God's creatures, and He did not give them life so that they should be shot down by men.

Cornel thought so, the fat innkeeper remarked, because he had seldom if ever met a live wolf, and also because he did not own flocks of sheep and herds of cattle from which young calves frequently strayed away to pasture in adjoining forests.

'You are a good fiddler and a God-fearing man, Cornel,' Papa Tanase patronizingly explained, 'but the Almighty meant something you do not understand when he gave to man hands and weapons to defend himself. Better play something for us, Cornel. As long as you play, we shall listen to you. About wolves, however, Cornel, you had better listen to us.'

Cornel tucked his fiddle away under his coat and refused to play.

'Won't you play to-day?' the smith asked with thickened tongue, holding a foaming cup of wine and approaching the gipsy. 'A joyous tune, Cornel. Coax a joyous tune to celebrate the saving of so many sheep from the jaws and claws of forty wild beasts.'

Cornel shook his head and stroked his long, pepper-grey beard. 'I can't play to-day.'

'Come, play,' urged another peasant. 'I have slain three beasts myself. Drink with me. Here!'

And he filled a cup which he offered to the gipsy as he wound his arm around his neck.

Cornel freed himself and shook his head energetically. 'No, no, I won't play to-day.'

They were all offended by his behaviour.

'Look at that *tzigan*!' called out the innkeeper. 'One might think that the wolves were his brothers. How he mourns them! He has lived twenty years in this place, on our river, gardening on its shores, playing at our weddings and funerals, yet he is brother to the beasts of prey. You can't make a human being out of a *tzigan*.'

The innkeeper's words found echo in the hearts of many. Their minds were already befogged by the fumes of wine and prune juice. They crowded Cornel from all sides.

'We don't ask you whether you want to play. We tell you to play, *tzigan*,' thundered the staggering, red-bearded, brown-muscle blacksmith.

The priest wedged his way through the crowd toward the gipsy.

'Let him go to his hut. He is in no mood to play to-day, men,' and putting his arm around the neck of the gipsy, he led him out of the door and to the road. 'Go home, Cornel. They are excited and drunk.'

When the two men were twenty paces away from the inn, the smith called from its door, 'Stand still, *tzigan*,' and levelling his long, double-

barrelled, old Turkish pistol he shot a hole through Cornel's tall fur cap.

'So that you remember this day and year,' he shouted above the laughter of the others who had come to the door to see the joke.

'You have angered your friends. May God be with you,' the priest admonished the fiddler when the smoke had cleared, and leaving him alone on the road, he returned to the inn.

Cornel's daughter Herta was talking to a hunch-backed pack pedlar when she saw her father coming. She left the man standing over his wares and ran to meet her father, wondering to see him come home so early on such a day – when there was to be great merriment at the inn. She tucked her thick, long, black braids into the neck opening of her homespun shirt as she ran toward him. She was anxious. Embracing the old man, she asked with troubled voice:

'Are you ill? *Tatuca!* You look tired and worn! Have your strings snapped? All of them?'

The father put his arm about his daughter's waist and walked beside her. She was his great joy and pride.

'I am well, daughter. The strings have not snapped. They will hold yet – until your wedding – then I will buy new ones, so that the man who will marry you shall remain faithful for ever.'

He saw the pack trader at his door.

'Who is that man?'

'Oh, he wants to sell me beads and rings and things, but I want none of his wares. But tell me why you are coming home so soon. The men have come back from the wolf hunts. There will be dancing at the inn to-night. All the girls are getting ready for to-night.'

'I am in no mood to play, Herta.

The girl paced quietly near her father, whose arm tightened about her waist. She knew that when he was in no mood to play, it was better to let him brood. She had learned that from her mother, who had died the previous year. He brooded days and nights at a stretch, looking at the flowing river in the summer and gazing at the burning logs in the fireplace in the winter time. Then suddenly he would start up with a cry or a loud laugh, grip his fiddle, and begin to play.

Sometimes he marched down the road, toward the inn, playing, waking people from their sleep or disturbing them in the middle of a work-day, until they followed him, in night clothes or working garb, leaving a warm bed, or the oxen yoked to the plough, to come and carouse with him at the inn. On such occasions wives did not see their husbands for a week, unless they joined them at the white pine table of the inn. But the women were never angry when the men were with Cornel. The poor men could not help it. It proved how much good there was in them. Cornel was play-

ing. They worked better after listening to the gipsy. They were kinder and more loving after that. Papa Tanase had once said that there were a thousand angels asleep in Cornel's fiddle, and that wherever Cornel was with his fiddle stood the house of God.

The pack trader stood at the door, when father and daughter neared their home.

'Go your way. I desire none of your things,' Herta told him as she entered the hut with her father's arm about her waist.

The peasants, drunken and sullen, called out vile names as they passed the gipsy's hut that night. Even the wheelwright, Jorga, who had never yet spoken of Herta without praising her beauty – it was he who had said he wondered why bees didn't cluster about her, mistaking her for a flower – even Jorga, on passing the hut, dragging the two wolf pelts on a rope, called out:

'Never knew your father was brother to a wolf! One can never know who the father of a *tzigan* may be! No wonder you are not married yet! You expect a wolf to offer you marriage.'

Jorga's remark wounded Herta deeply. He was a handsome young man, and she had hoped he would some day ask her to marry him.

That Sunday there was much drinking, but no dancing, at the inn. The men returned to their homes, sullen and angry. The crying of the beaten wives pierced the moonless night. The dogs

howled. Drunken men are beasts on moonless nights. Herta lay on her bed and looked at her father. He had hardly moved from the place in two days. He sat facing the wall, eyes wide open, leaning his bearded chin on his hands, which were folded over the heavy knob of a stick, and thought and thought. He was deaf to all the curses thrown at him by the passing peasants, deaf to the thumps of stones that rattled against his door and fell at his feet through the broken, small window-panes.

'*Tzigan*, cursed *tzigan*, brother to the wolf!' the villagers cursed.

'If men could be as kind to wolves as they are, occasionally, to dogs, then they would not need to go on killing them,' Cornel finally said to his daughter on Monday morning. 'I have lived here twenty years now. The peasants have mostly been kind to me. But where I have come from — it was different.'

Herta was too happy to see her father emerge out of his brooding mood to listen to what he said. She warmed some food and hovered over him while he ate. He fell asleep with the spoon in his hand. She took his boots off and put him to bed although it was broad daylight. He was so weak and so tired!

That night there was great joy at the inn. Cornel was playing again, playing better than

ever. The smith kissed his hands and begged that Cornel exchange his ruined fur cap with him. And when the gipsy refused, he sewed two gold pieces where the holes had been shot through.

'Forgive me, Cornel. Forgive me, brother,' he cried, tears rolling down his drunken face.

Before the night was old, the wives and sons and daughters of the village crowded the inn. Daylight found the men and the women still drinking and singing. The youngsters that were too tired from dancing were asleep on the floor, near the walls, or were outside talking of love and making trysts. The innkeeper, drunk himself, had obtained forgiveness from the gipsy and had, in honour of that event, opened the wooden tap of a tall barrel of red wine that was standing in the centre of the shop, and allowed the juice to run freely.

'To baptize the renewed friendship. Drink, brothers. Cornel is my friend again,' he cried, weeping on the fiddler's shoulder.

Cornel had hardly left his hut, that evening, when the pack trader rapped at the window.

'What do you want here at night?' Herta asked.

She had been singing softly to herself, happy that her father was himself again.

'I heard your voice, so I thought of a certain necklace I have. It's just the thing for a neck like yours,' the trader answered and entered the door before she bade him come in,

'I won't buy anything from you now, stranger, she defended herself.

Herta's eyes were already fastened on the shimmering waters of the necklace of precious stones, which the trader dangled from one of his fingers.

'Just try it on,' he urged, approaching her.

'No, no,' Herta protested.

She was frightened. It was so beautiful a thing! She could not buy it.

But the man had already passed the necklace over her head and was looking at her.

Herta looked at him. He carried a heavy pack on his hunched shoulders. He had not even thought of loosening the straps when he had come into the hut. The weight of the pack did not seem to tire him. Her eyes caught the play of muscles under the sleeves. She looked at his hands. The grain of the skin was fine and young. And his eyes were large and wide open. They were not at all the eyes of a tired man, and younger than his bearded face. It frightened her to observe these details.

'Now, you had better go, stranger. I won't buy anything. Come when my father is here.'

She opened the door.

'As you wish.'

He took a step toward the door. There he straightened up and looked at Herta.

'If there is another man between me and you,

'I shall take the measure for his coffin,' he called as he did so.

Before Herta had had time to recover herself, the man was gone.

Scared, Herta looked at the necklace that was still dangling on her breast. The darker the room grew, the more beautiful the waters in the jewels. The milky fire of the quiet pearls, the passionate skies of the opals, and the mysterious traceries of the topaz merged into each other. Frightened, the gipsy girl took off the necklace, and with the jewels in her hand, she ran toward the inn to be under the protection of her father. She intended to tell him what had happened, but when she saw him happy and surrounded by the joyous peasants, she smiled her best smile and said, hugging him:

'I, too, have come to dance.'

Jorga, the wheelwright, locked his arm with hers, and the priest smilingly asked:

'When shall I officiate at the wedding?' For it was no secret that the boy was in love with the gipsy girl. They laughed at the priest's sally and applauded, but Herta squeezed her fingers on the necklace in her hands and felt she was already dancing with a corpse. The words of the pack trader, 'I shall measure him for his coffin,' still rang in her ears.

Encouraged by the dance, Jorga asked her, when they sat down, 'What answer shall I give to Papa Tanase, Herta?'

A deathly pallor came over her face. That necklace was still in her hand. She did not answer. She turned partly away to drop the necklace into her bosom. She heard Jorga talking, but she did not hear what he was saying. It seemed to her that the fires of the jewels were burning themselves into her heart. It was as if the other man were there under the garment, holding her, and listening.

Suddenly, when Jorga said something about love, she jumped up.

'Don't say such things to me, Jorga. He will kill you.'

'I did not know there was another one,' Jorga answered, standing up.

Then he went over to the counter and drank glass after glass of brandy, refusing to join in the dances or songs of the others.

Two things happened that morning. On his way home Cornel, half drunk, holding on to the arm of his daughter, discovered a wolf pup whining on the road. Herta took the shivering, little, furry thing in her arms, and they brought it to their hut, where they put it down between the two pups tugging at the breasts of the sleeping mother dog. Cornel, who was rapidly recovering his senses, watched the wolf pup feeding itself and muttered to his daughter: 'We shall see! We shall see!' Then he went to sleep.

Herta did not go to her bed. So many things had happened to her. That necklace, the pack trader, Jorga. And now the wolf pup . . . Suddenly there were loud cries in the village.

While the people had been at the inn the dogs had been poisoned, and horses, oxen, and sheep had been driven off into the mountains. It was Lica's work – Lica, the wolf man, the brigand, head of the robbers and thieves, who preyed on the peasants of the neighbourhood, and whose name was blasphemed in the churches, and for whose capture the government had offered a prize – a thousand ducats in gold, dead or alive.

The next few weeks were agog with excitement for the village. The gendarmes came, and after questioning everybody, they organized hunts through the wooded mountains. When they returned, after several false arrests of innocent travellers, they swore at the peasants, calling them liars and thieves, smiled at the girls, emptied a wine barrel at the inn, and departed not to be heard of again until the next occasion. There was too much sorrow for dancing or festivities. It was too early in the season to plough. The villagers got drunk. But their drunkenness did not lead to gaiety – it was to smother sorrow.

'Let's drink, brothers. One works only for wolves and bandits. Oxen will soon have to be replaced by men and women yoking themselves at the head of the plough. Let's drink, brothers.'

The women cried. The men walked about morosely eyeing the mountains. If they only got their hands on Lical! They would tear him to pieces with their hands.

Cornel did not seem much concerned with the sorrows of the village. He was engrossed watching the wolf pup being fed and mothered by the dog. The whole day long, he watched the wolf pup playing with the dog pups of the litter. He was a Carpathian wolf, and his neck was stiff, as of one piece, so that he had to turn completely around every time a pup attacked him from behind. The dog pups learned that very soon, and they would tussle, crowd and pull him, always coming from behind. Cornel laughed so loud that many a neighbour, not knowing the cause, thought the gipsies rejoiced in the misfortune of the village.

Cornel was so absorbed with the wolf pup that he did not notice his daughter growing paler from day to day. Every time Jorga came near the hut, she trembled like a leaf – and yet she did not know whether she trembled because of Jorga's danger or because of the other man. She knew that the necklace he had given her was of genuine jewels. He must have stolen them. A thief!

Yet she never said a word about that man even to her father; never showed him the jewels the man had given her.

But sorrow, like joy, does not last for ever. The snow melted fast. The Easter holidays were approaching. There was no good in blinding oneself weeping. God will compensate the people of the village with some marvellous harvest. Papa Tanase said so. He spoke consoling words at the church on Sunday. There were eggs to be coloured and painted, *cozonatches*, cakes to be baked, new garments had to be finished. From the church the peasants went to the inn. The sorceress of the village, Baba Tana, said that if every inhabitant were to paint a coffin on every eleventh egg and think of Lica as they did so, Lica would die before the year was over. Of course, the egg with the painted coffin should be given to her for further incantation purposes. Easter night she would feed the shadows on eggs and ask for Lica's life as compensation.

When they had all assembled at the inn some one suddenly asked:

'Where is Cornel?'

'Haven't seen him for weeks,' the innkeeper replied, 'neither him nor his daughter.'

'Something is the matter with that *tzigan* pair,' argued Radu, the shepherd, Cornel's nearest neighbour. 'You hear Cornel laugh from early morn to late at night, as if he watched the antics of a baby. Herta walks about sad-eyed and morose. Does anybody know? Ha?' And he turned around with questioning eyes.

The bearded men looked at the youngsters, who returned the stare frankly.

'Well,' continued Radu, who was very superstitious, 'you can't tell whom *tzigans* befriend. Didn't they forge the nails for the cross of our Saviour? They did – well.'

'Of course, that about forging the nails of the cross is true. Yet I can't believe Cornel is up to anything against us!' argued the repentant blacksmith.

'Let's go and see,' proposed Jorga.

They marched down to Cornel's hut. He and his daughter were sitting on their haunches and watching the play of the pups. The peasants looked at Radu and burst out in a concert of loud laughter. It was the first laughter for more than a month heard in the village.

'But this pup here has the coat of a wolf,' a peasant pointed out.

'So he is,' answered Cornel. 'I am going to raise him together with my dogs, to prove that kindness is better than a gun.'

The peasants shook their heads disapprovingly.

'A wolf remains a wolf, Cornel,' they told him. 'You cannot change his instincts. The only good wolf is a dead wolf.'

The gipsy did not agree with them. 'Kindness, kindness is the thing.'

Yet they did smile at the antics of the pups.

Then they began to urge Cornel to come to the inn and play for them.

'Come, we want to hear you play. But if you had caught the other wolf, Lica, instead of this one, it would have been better.'

'Come, our hearts are hungry for your tunes.'

'Come, our limbs want to sing. We have sorrowed enough.'

And so they coaxed him until he took his violin from the nail on which it was hanging. And with Cornel at the head, playing as he walked ankle-deep in the soft mud of the road, they marched to the inn. And there was great merriment that Sunday. There was so much that they wanted to forget. Between times Cornel talked about his plan of raising the wolf. The knowing peasants frowned at first, then they smiled. It was amusing to hear him talk. Bercu, the most facetious of them all, promised to give Cornel a hen with her brood of fifteen chicks.

'That will teach the gipsy what a wolf is,' he explained, winking to his neighbour.

'Very well, thanks, Bercu,' Cornel accepted. 'And I will show you that that wolf will never touch any of my hens, nor any of yours.'

'Now, play, play, Cornel. You don't know about wolves, but you can play.'

Then there was talk of Lica and how they would torture him when he should fall into their hands. Cornel listened, and his heart became sick of their

cruelty. So he played something they had never heard before. Slow and deep like a prayer it rose from the bow! The youngsters ceased their dancing and bared their heads as if they had suddenly entered the church. The four walls of the inn, lined with wine barrels, and the ceiling, from which hung hams and pelts, had become a holy place. The grey-bearded gipsy standing in their midst was the priest. Down to their souls, to the innermost depths, his prayer of song reached. And it cleansed them of impure thoughts and made them feel that life could be made one of eternal sunshine and joy, and not what it was — one in which toil and winter and wolves played the greatest part. Why had they never thought of that before? Their sorrows seemed so small now.

When Cornel drew the last tone from his bow, Bercu kissed his hand reverently. Radu was crying. The innkeeper's eyes were moist. The women's heads were bowed, and the youngsters looked at one another furtively, ashamed of the knives and pistols that protruded from their red sashes. Herta was sobbing with her head in her hands. Then she left the inn silently, walking slowly to her home. She had seen the pack trader that morning. He had looked at her without speaking.

Months passed, months of heavy toil which

left the men and women too tired to play even on Sunday. From time to time news spread of Lica's new exploits – killing of gendarmes, burning of farms, droves of oxen stolen and driven across the border into Hungary. Yet no one had ever seen him face to face. He was like a destructive phantom. The more superstitious ones began to say that he was a *strigoi*, an evil spirit come down to earth, or that he had an enchanted life.

Meanwhile the wolf in Cornel's yard grew larger and more powerful than any of the dogs of the litter he had been raised with. Herta would occasionally be taken aback by his bared fangs when the other dogs interfered with him, especially at feeding time. A pat of her hand on his head would bring Lupu to his senses and make him as playful, as submissive, as the others. Even the neighbours allowed Lupu to stray into their yards and play with their pups. In full-moon nights, when the dogs barked, the young wolf raised his head and tried to bark. His howling scared the dogs at first, but they accustomed themselves to its lugubrious sound, and they ran about and played with him as if he were a dog. Among the grown, shaggy shepherd dogs he looked like one of them, except for the peculiarity of his stiff neck and his leanness. For no matter how much he fed, his ribs would stick out.

At the sound of Cornel's voice he would come

running, and throw himself at his master's feet, and whine and howl until he was patted on the head.

But as the summer advanced toward autumn, and Lupu was six months old, neighbours began to complain that hens were being killed daily – hens and ducks and an occasional young kid. They did not directly accuse Lupu, for no one had caught him, yet – Cornel knew what they thought. One neighbour begged that Cornel should chain the wolf.

'To avoid unjust suspicion. Why should we sin by accusing him?' he argued.

'Yes, chain him, if only to prove that another dog is doing the work of a wolf. It may even be so with Lica. A dozen other bad men may be doing the evil he is blamed for,' cried Herta.

But Cornel frowned and refused. 'If I chain him, then he will forget all my kindness. It cannot be true what they think or say, for he has never touched any of our hens! I cannot believe it of him. We feed him well – we are kind to him. And with Lica it must have been the same. If anybody had ever been kind to him, he would remember.'

Herta could have said how she had often been scared by the young wolf's bared fangs, yet she did not mention it. Her father was right – about the wolf – about Lica, also. And she trembled

thinking of what would happen to him if he were caught.

Then a terrible thing happened. One early morning, later in the autumn, just before the first snow fell, Herta was awakened by a frightful noise in their own hennerly. She scrambled out of her bed and ran out. And there in the misty blue was Lupu, with another wolf of his own size, pawing away at the frightened fowl. More than a dozen were already flapping white wings in their own blood. She yelled from the depth of her lungs. Cornel came out with gun in hand. Herta, mute with fear, ran to his arms and pointed with her finger to Lupu and the other one who were running, each with a chicken in his teeth, toward the mountains.

Cornel let go with both barrels at the same time, but he was only a good fiddler, Cornel was. He cried like a baby when he entered the hennerly. It was more than the dead fowl that he mourned.

'What is of a wolf is wolf,' the peasants told him.

And it was true. True, true! They were right.

'No earthly use to waste kindness on a wolf,' the innkeeper tried to pacify the gipsy as he poured him a drink.

Cornel was inconsolable. He looked curiously at Herta when he returned home. She grieved more than he did. Her eyes were swollen from weening.

A few days later another hennery was broken into, and not a dog barked to awaken his master. It was Lupu, who, being known to the dogs, had come and robbed when they least suspected him. They did not even bark when they heard him come. He was one of them. Days later he returned with his mate. Ordinarily even a small shepherd dog is enough to scare the largest wolf. The wolf knows that the shepherd dog will always jump at him from behind, and that before he has turned his whole body the dog's teeth will be sunk in his neck. But Lupu had conquered the fear of dogs. Playing and pawing with the dogs, he had learned not to fear them and not to fight them, always facing them when at bay. It kept them at a distance, for never yet has dog attacked a wolf facing him. Lupu's mate soon also conquered her fears and rubbed noses with the dogs before breaking into the henneries and corrals where the late-born lambs were kept. Lupu knew all the places and how to get into them.

In spite of all watchfulness the robberies continued. Even pigsties were broken into, although a cordon of bonfires was kept burning night after night. Lupu had conquered his fear of fire. He had played near it with his former master, and he helped his mate also to conquer all the fears of wolfdom — man, dog, fire.

Every time a sheep was stolen or a hennery

broken into, Cornel felt that it was because of him, because of his stupid belief in kindness. Now he understood what the phrase meant, 'What is born of wolf, is wolf.' Only it was too late. And when they talked of Lica, he no longer interposed himself in the bandit's favour. All wolves were alike. Unable to sleep, he roamed around with gun in hand through the forest and mountains to kill Lupu. But Lupu was too clever.

When the snow had fallen a few days, wolves led by Lupu began to come in great packs. Never before had the beasts been so audacious. Many of the dogs had to be shot, for they behaved like the wolves themselves; stole and killed what they were supposed to guard. Other dogs fled to the forest, the wolf blood in them asserting itself when the masters beat them for reasons they did not understand.

There was no more playing of the fiddle for Cornel. He and Herta would sit facing each other, afraid of each other's thoughts, every time a depredation was committed. It was well for them that Papa Tanase, the priest, loved the gipsy and his daughter, for many a time an impoverished peasant had vowed to revenge himself and the others by setting fire to the *tzigan's* hut.

To top the evil, Lica and his band, like brothers

to the wolves, made raid after raid and trimmed the flocks and the herds of the best in the corrals and stables. And every time, before a raid, Herta would see the pack trader in the village. Was it coincidence or was the pack trader one of Lica's spies? Herta thought and thought as she fingered the necklace he had given her.

Did he know that she suspected him? He came there unafraid. One word from her lips and his body would hang limply from a rope . . . And yet, perhaps, he was innocent! He never spoke to her, avoided her hut, looked at her from a distance. She could feel his eyes on her even when turned away. Why, why was he what he was? A wolf. A wolf – like Lupu.

By the time the snow had melted, there was not one peasant who had enough oxen to yoke to a plough; not one who had enough eggs to colour for Easter. Baba Tana, the sorceress, asked that on every third egg be painted a coffin. There was no eleventh egg in any house of the village. And when the peasants saw the terribly aged Cornel going into the forest every morning, and understood why he carried his gun, their hearts softened to him, but they said:

'Now he carries a gun. Last year he played his fiddle to wolves. He is the cause of our misfortunes.'

And still no one alive could claim that he had seen Lica face to face,

One morning the pack trader trod the roads of the village, entering every hut, talking, selling, bartering. Herta trembled like a leaf as she watched him from the door of her hut. Another raid? There was nothing more they could take. She would go up to him and tell him, and return the necklace to him. Better still, she would tell the peasants. And even if it should kill her, she would rid the country of another wolf. There were enough without him.

'Let me buy you a string of beads,' asked her father. 'Shall I call him?'

She did not answer. She looked out into the road. He was talking to women who fingered the beads.

While they were talking, heavy hoof-beats were heard coming from the other end of the village, and gendarmes on horseback appeared with their short-barrelled carbines ready at hand. With the agility of a cat the pack trader threw the pack from his shoulders, divested himself of his heavy coat, and rising to his full height, he stood with a pistol in each hand, firing at the gendarmes.

Herta smothered a cry that rose to her lips. It was Lica. Lica himself!

When the smoke had thinned, the stranger was on horseback, on his own horse that had waited for him behind the trees and followed him

as he had gone from hut to hut, and was firing, riding backward at full speed, with the gendarmes behind him, toward the wooded mountains. A number of peasants joined the gendarmes, for they all realized now who the pack trader was — Lica, Lica who had come to spy on them. The whole afternoon and far into the evening the women and children watched the road and listened to the shots that were fired in the mountains. Oh, they hoped it would be the end of Lica, the wolf. The gendarmes were at his heels. Yet — every time a shot was heard, Herta thought of the man's eyes and of his great agility as he divested himself of his pack and heavy coat, and she hoped — He was so handsome. So strong. And he loved her. He loved her.

But no. He was like a wolf. Like Lupu. He and his wolves had impoverished the village. Another shot was fired. Her heart sank. She listened. They fired no longer. They have killed him. But her heart leaped with joy. Shot after shot was fired again. He was alive. Alive. That splendid body that rode so gracefully on the horse was alive. Those eyes were still open. Each shot was like a cry from his lips, 'I am alive.' She tightened her fingers on the necklace he had given her and which she had never worn. He was alive.

The women came up to talk to her,

'He has sold me beads – this string here – look at it. And to me he sold a neckerchief. What did you buy from him, Herta?'

'Nothing.'

'I hope they catch him. There is a prize of a thousand ducats of gold on his head. If they catch him, they ought to give the money to our men, that they buy cattle with it.'

Cornel entered the forest, gun in hand. He had told Herta before going:

'I would gladly give ten years of my life if my bullet kills him.'

Herta had looked at him. He had become like a stranger to her. Now she listened to the shots that reverberated in the mountains. How Lica had looked at her while he had put on the neck-lace! But a moment later she thought: He is like a wolf! He should be killed, even as Lupu should be killed. Her father was right. But when the firing ceased, her heart sank, her knees weakened, tears came to her eyes.

She entered her hut and listened through the open window. From time to time she heard a faint reverberation. They were far, far away – far on the other side of the mountains.

Late that night, while father and daughter were looking at each other by the faint light thrown by the floating oil candle that was burning in a glass under the holy image of Christ's mother – late that night, they heard a rap at the window.

Startled from his reverie, the old gipsy called out, unbolting the window:

'Who is there?'

'A dying man,' answered a feeble voice.

When Cornel unbolted the door, a man, bleeding and in tatters, stumbled inside.

'It's Lica,' Herta called out.

And it was Lica, the wolf, wounded, dying. Before Herta had recovered from the shock, the old gipsy's gun was pointed at the man's breast.

'Father, a guest! *Our* guest. Remember that,' she cried as she turned the weapon aside.

'A wolf,' argued Cornel.

'It is a man, a dying man,' cried Herta, holding the barrel of the gun.

Lica was unconscious. Father and daughter put him on the straw mattress near the fireplace and washed the wound in his chest. The whole night long, they watched the feverish man. Cornel looked at the man's chiselled features, at the long, velvety eyelashes over his closed eyes, at the fine, curved line of his mouth, the wide shoulders and the strong arms, and he thought, Could it be that such a creature should not respond to kindness?

During the night the wounded man was shaken by spasms. In one of those spasms he gave orders to his comrades. Herta's heart stopped

beating while she listened. Then of a sudden he was still again.

'Listen to his heart. Is he still alive?' she begged her father.

'Just a flutter; a slight flutter, daughter. Some more water. And give me that flask of brandy.'

The duty of a host to a wounded man was now uppermost in Cornel's mind. It was not at all the same Cornel who had gone into the forest willing to give ten years of his life for the privilege of killing Lica.

Toward the morning, after a longer spasm followed by copious sweating, the wounded man began to breathe more regularly and fell asleep. When he opened his eyes, he asked:

'Where am I?'

'Among friends,' answered Cornel.

Herta was crying in her hands.

Lica smiled a sickening smile. 'Call the gendarmes. A thousand ducats are on my head.'

She gave him a drink of cold water. 'You are our guest, Lica, not our captive.'

He looked into her eyes as she spoke and held the cup to his mouth, propping up his head. 'No - you will not betray me,' he said softly. Then he leaned back and fell asleep again.

Cornel bowed his head. 'We are warming another wolf, Herta, instead of exterminating him. Have I not brought enough misery upon the people?'

But Herta kissed away his tears. 'We may yet make a man out of a wolf and thus repair our mistake with Lupu. Don't tell them anything. It's God's will. God led him to our door.'

'So did he lead Lupu, the wolf. It seems to be His will that all the wolves should come to my door,' Cornel cried.

Had not Lica robbed the corrals and the stables of the village? A bullet was the best he was worth. Only Herta begged so! She invoked the law of hospitality against denouncing the wounded bandit. He would be hanged anyhow, when the gendarmes caught him. And even the peasants would think he had done wrong if he were to denounce a wounded guest – even if that guest happened to be Lica.

'But what if I refuse the price on his head?'

'Oh, father, let me try, even as you have tried with Lupu!'

She was continually ministering to Lica, talking to him, arranging his pillow under his head, watching him. And he sought every opportunity to have her near him. One day, when Lica had for the first time for a month left his bed, he asked after a long silence:

'There is a prize of a thousand ducats on my head, Cornel. Why don't you take it? I am yet too weak to fight.'

'Am I a wolf to feed on one of my own kind

when he has fallen?' Cornel answered, angrily looking the man in the eyes.

Then Cornel sat down and told Lica the story of the wolf he had raised. And of how because of him the whole village had been impoverished – and yet Herta maintained that kindness was better than a gun when dealing with men. When Cornel finished his story, the bandit was in tears.

A few days before Easter Sunday Lica disappeared from Cornel's hut. The gipsy had gone to a funeral, and Herta had gone to the well for water. When she returned; Lica was gone.

'He had no faith in us. A wolf, cruel and suspicious. He was afraid the thousand ducats would tempt us,' cried Cornel.

But Herta was calm and serene. She smiled and said: 'It is as it should be. If he is still what he was, then I have failed, not he.'

Cornel looked at his daughter and thought he understood.

That Sunday, while the priest was reading the services to the disheartened peasants, a great noise was heard on the road. Sheep were bleating, horses were neighing, cows were mooing. The peasants followed by the priest ran out. A whole herd of cattle was in front of the church. At the head of a dozen men on horseback rode Lica.

'I have brought you back what wolves have

taken from you,' he called out. 'I am Lica. I have one bullet left in my pistol. It is for the man who will say Cornel was wrong when he tried to be kind to a wolf. And I shall also bring you new dogs. And they will guard well what belongs to their masters.'

Then he dismounted, and kissing the hem of Herta's skirt, he cried:

'I was a wolf, myself!'

A moment later he had disappeared in the mountains.

A week later he returned. Cornel himself played at the wedding of his daughter. And as no one claimed the thousand ducats of gold, Lica is still living on the river Oltu, where his flocks graze on the slopes of the green mountains.

Merchants

COME to Damascus, the old city of Damascus! 'The sand-laden wind of the desert polishes the tops of the mushroom-like, flat, round towers. Patches of gold glitter in the sun, when the sirocco, the wind of the desert, has ceased; glitter between the cracks of the greenish roof copper sheeting, reminding of the old glory of the city of the caliphs, Damascus, the key city of the world. The narrow, crooked streets upon which look small, high iron-barred windows from overleaning, heavy, white walls, the cobblestones of the pavement, the praying men wrapped in shawls and rugs at the street corners, the braying ass groaning under the load of calf-skin water-bags bulging down to his hoofs—all this cries aloud that Damascus is still Damascus, as it was a thousand, two thousand years ago, as it will be in all eternity. Bagdad has changed, Alexandria has become transformed into a modern city, Tyre and Nineveh are gone and forgotten; Damascus still remains, as Paul of Tarsus had seen it, as the caliphs of Ommiads have willed it.

'The small anvils, the steel of which has been half eaten away by the blasts of sand that have passed over them, spiked six feet underground, upon which twenty generations of sword-makers have hammered the thin, cold steel into famous

blue blades, are still glistening in front of the bazaars. There is an old and a new minaret near the gate. Both towers are painted green. The new one is over a thousand years old. The stalls of the heavy, columnar bazaars, hung with rugs, groan with brocades and embroidered shawls and engraved yataghans, razor-sharp on both edges, with hilts covered with inlaid mother-of-pearl, "sideef," and poignards with silver handles made by the men of the desert under the shadows of palm-trees, while the camels sun themselves, and the tiger and the lion look at one another from behind the golden sand hillocks.

'Come to Damascus!' my father urged.

And so we went to Damascus. For generations and generations my forefathers have brought their offspring to Damascus to acquaint them with, on the outskirts of the city, a few ruined walls behind a cobblestone-paved yard, where lean goats were angrily tearing the grass and moss that grew between the cracks. It was our ancestral home. One did not belong to the family unless he had slept a night between those walls. It was home, the only home. The other place we lived in was 'the abode.'

And so we slept between those walls the first night of our arrival, although the wind blew the sharp sand into our faces, and big, cold lizards crept over and under our blankets.

In the morning, the cold blue morning of the desert, father, after having drunk deeply from the moss-covered wooden pail of the thousand-year-old well, kept fresh by neighbours who went for water to it daily, proposed that we go to town, 'to see the bazaars,' he said.

'And to find lodgings,' I suggested.

'As you say,' he answered, but his eyes dimmed. When he had visited 'our home' with his father, they had made it their home while they were there, and cooked their meals in the iron kettle still hanging on the iron tripod over the stones of the deep old fireplace.

Although I was dressed in European garb, father had put on Arab pantaloons (*shalvaris*), and covered his shoulders with a greyish dolman of camel's-hair, the 'sourtouk' that reached to his feet, on which he wore, stockingless, a pair of heelless, pointy *papoutchi*. The turban on his head completed the change. I hardly recognized him in that garb. His spare, wiry black beard made his face look almost wax pale. He looked taller and broader and stronger than he was, an Arab just come up out of the desert.

'We go to the bazaars,' he announced curtly, having lost his loquaciousness of the day before, when he was still a European.

In the open domed curves of the bazaar sat long-bearded, turbaned men drawing from long pipes the cool smoke that passed through rose-scented

water, while the thick morning coffee, as black and thick as pitch, was allowed to cool in the small, long-handled pots in which it had been brewed.

'As Mohammed is our prophet,' called out one merchant at the sight of my father, 'Ali, my friend Ali, come from strange lands again!' He rose to his feet. The two men embraced, patting each other's backs tenderly.

'Murad! Murad!' my father repeated, retreating and looking at the man. 'I hope Allah is as good to me as he has been to you. You look not one year older than when I last saw you, fifteen years ago.'

'*Allah il Allah, Mohammed Rassoul Allah* (God is God, and Mohammed is his prophet),' Murad answered, bowing low, and touching his heart and forehead with his hand.

'This is my son, come with me to see Damascus.'

Murad looked at me just fleetingly; disapprovingly, I thought. Then the two men sat down to a few puffs from the narghile and a few sips of coffee.

'And you will make your abode — where?' inquired Murad.

'That I shall see.'

'I am the first to have bid you welcome, Ali. Therefore you and your son are my guests. We shall be waiting for you with the evening pilaff

after sundown,' Murad answered, and returned to sit placidly in the doorway after rekindling the small charcoal fire in a brass bowl over the jar of the narghile.

2

We tramped between the stalls in the narrow, crooked streets. At every few steps my father was recognized and greeted and offered a smoke and a sip of coffee. And every one invited us to be his guest, only to be told that Murad had seen us first; to which every one replied he wished Allah had been as good to him that morning.

Heavily laden mules passed us, going back and forth, led by barefooted young boys. Grey camels from the deserts sprawled and kneeled, barring the way, obstructing all movement. There was a rumbling noise — calls, disputes, between merchants and customers. Children ate *barbuzes* (water-melons), squatting on the cobblestones, and heavily veiled women glided like shadows along the walls, stopping here and there to finger a piece of yellow silk, a bit of heavy green *atlass* (satin), or to have a few words with the jeweller or the goat-bearded, squatting silversmith, who answered without raising his eyes from the small anvil spiked in the ground. But in all this bustle I saw no money, no actual buying or selling. It seemed like a make-believe, yet fundamentally more real

than the manner of buying and selling in civilized cities.

Toward sundown, with feet blistered and aching, we made our way to Murad's house, a sprawling stone mansion set behind a well-paved yard not far from the 'New' Giamie. Murad showed us our room, with two low divans. The walls were hung with three thicknesses of rugs. There were no chairs; only a round table with legs not a foot high. And cushions, cushions, cushions, and rugs in their hundreds. Never had I seen so many cushions in one room.

A while later a girl, with uncovered face, came to serve us the evening meal. I had never before been as awkward with the two-pronged wooden fork. It seemed to go everywhere but my mouth, for the girl, the servant girl, 'Jusuph's daughter,' Murad informed my father, was beautiful.

'Jusuph's daughter a servant!' my father exclaimed. 'He was a rich merchant, the richest!'

'He has come upon evil days. He had to pay blood-money to save his son from the hangman. His son Mustapha having killed a man, he had to pay blood-money to his widow or see the boy die. And so he paid. May the sun again shine on his house!'

'I had heard about that,' my father answered. Thereafter they sat silent. The two men looked at each other and smoked while I had my eyes on

the rug that served as a door and through which Hazi flitted back and forth, bringing and taking the dishes, serving the coffee, blowing the charcoals of the smoking narghile, arranging the cushions, smoothing out the blankets on the divans. She was tall and lean and hard. Her bare arms and legs were sinewy, and the long muscles rose and fell and swelled with every movement. Her face was a perfect oval. Her firm, full lips smiled. Her long eyelashes lowered themselves when I looked at her, surprising her looking at me. During the meal-time she had not said a single word. She served noiselessly, walking to and fro in her bare feet; then, while the men smoked, she sat down in a corner and waited. From the harem, at the other end of the house, came the sound of a well played *tchiulea*, a sort of mandolin, accompanied by a strongly rhythmized tambourine.

‘The women of the harem. They know I have guests to-night. My wife will soon come to greet us.’

Murad had hardly finished the words when a rather stout woman, her face veiled, but her fat arms and shoulders bare, came in to bid us welcome. She remained only a minute in the room, then she withdrew, walking backward slowly. At the doorway she raised her finger. Jusuph’s daughter, after having looked at her master and received a nod from him, followed her mistress.

Shortly afterward Murad withdrew, after bidding us happy dreams.

The music ceased. The house became as still as a tomb. Father blew out the candle that was stuck in an earthen jar.

'Sleep well, son. Sleep well, son. You are in Damascus.'

3

Jusuph was too old a man to have known my father as well as Murad, but when we approached his stall, and my father had introduced himself as Ali ben Abner, ben Khadir of the 'Chalfan' money-changers' branch of the Schinazi family, he greeted us effusively. He was a man in the seventies, beak-nosed and very lean. His thin lips, under a very spare moustache, moved nervously. His forehead was very high. His thin, straggling white beard reached to his belt. He was carefully, meticulously dressed. The dark-blue pantaloons, with brown cuffs at the ankles, fell in neat folds. The fez seemed to have just come out of the *calapod* (the brass press) in which it had been steamed into shape, and his burnoose of heavy velvet, with two rows of copper buttons, fitted him perfectly. He had the grand manner of a merchant prince, yet his bazaar was absolutely empty. The only thing he had for sale was an assortment of magnificent pistols, six in number, the like of which I had never seen. The silver inlaid work of those

handles, the filigree work in gold, the *smaragds* and rubies sunk into the blue steel of the long barrels, were marvels of the goldsmiths' and jewellers' handicraft. Father looked at them carefully, appraisingly, examining them minutely while Jusuph followed his every movement with glistening eyes. Then he asked as he laid the last weapon down:

'How much for the six of them?'

'It is well you ask how much for the six of them, for I could not offer them singly,' Jusuph answered calmly. 'But, tell me, have you grown so rich in the land beyond the Black Sea that you can own things just for the sake of their beauty? Or do you want to offer them to your king? Or do you think of profit in reselling?'

'I want to own them,' father answered, 'if I can get them for a reasonable price.' He stressed the last words.

'Six hundred gold pieces,' named Jusuph; and as if he did not care whether he sold them or not, he began blowing the coals of his narghile.

'You evidently mean silver pieces,' father said sarcastically.

'What!' cried out Jusuph, stretching out to his full length, his eyes ablaze, 'you Chalfan money-changer's son! You are like your father Abner, like your grandfather Khadir, profiting from other people's plights. You, you — how dare you even speak of silver at the sight of such marvels! Ah,

because you have heard of my misfortune! So you too have come, come across the seas. You have come to get a share of blood-money. I know you; I know you "Chalfan Kepeks" – dogs of money-changers.'

Father listened calmly to the old man's insults. The least I expected was to see him leave Jusuph's place. Instead of that, he sat down on a rug and lit a cigarette.

When Jusuph had overcome his rage, he went to sit near father and puffed distractedly from the smoking pipe, looking straight ahead. After a while he asked in a soft voice:

'Where are you staying, my friend?'

'With Murad, my boyhood friend and your neighbour.'

'Even have you seen my daughter in his house?'

'Yes; and a beautiful girl she is, Effendi Jusuph.'

'Has Murad told you of the evil days that have come on my house?'

'May Allah be merciful, I have known your bazaar when it groaned with merchandise. On my last trip I have bought good silverware from you, Effendi Jusuph.'

'Indeed. Then why and how do you dare to offer me silver for yonder priceless things when gold could not pay their value?' the merchant queried, shaking his head reprovingly.

'Because you have asked six hundred gold pieces,' father answered querulously. 'Am I an

Inglese or giaour infidel to be asked such a price?’

‘What is your offer in gold?’

‘One hundred and five gold pieces.’

For two hours they quarrelled, mentioning each other’s fathers and grandfathers in praise and derision. When father offered another five gold pieces, Jusuph, being the older and therefore privileged, abused the memory of my grandfather. But when he came down twenty gold pieces from his price he assured his customer that he did so only because he had known Khadir, my great-grandfather. ‘He had once done me a favour, which I want to repay to the great-grandson, as all good deeds should be repaid, according to the Koran.’

At the end of two hours father had raised his bid to one hundred and fifty, and Jusuph had come down to five hundred gold pieces, and we left the bazaar of Jusuph.

We remained standing in the white sunlight that was beating down in vertical rays.

‘Here are two gold pieces,’ father told me. ‘Damascus should be discovered and not shown. Go where you desire, but be home after sundown.’

He had hardly disappeared around the corner when I turned homeward, to Murad’s house. On the way I bought scented tobacco from the Greek venders and flat, three-cornered sweet paste made

of almonds and honey. I was mobbed, waylaid by a host of street-venders, who barred my way when they had seen me change a gold piece. They fell upon me like gay crows upon carrion. 'Buy from me! Buy from me! My paste is better than his. His honey is of yesteryear.'

At the end of an hour, with pockets full of things and relieved of all the change of the first gold piece, I reached home. Hazi was lying face downward on a pile of cushions and was smoking a cigarette. She turned on the side cautiously, lazily, when she heard me come, and looked on quietly with just a flicker of a smile on her lips. I looked at her and smiled sheepishly.

'Do you like sweets?' I asked, approaching her, and beginning to empty my pockets on one of the cushions near her.

'Sweets!' she cried out, jumping to her feet. 'Sweets — *halvitza* and *baklava* and *rahat* and *peltea* — oh, look what he has brought!' She threw her cigarette away, and began to bite into one of the hard almond pastes.

'It is not so sweet as you are, although you may be as hard,' I said, and I seized her hand. Before I had time to say another word the women of the harem, five of them, in their bare feet, headed by Murad's wife, unveiled, had skipped into the room.

'Sweets! sweets!' they cried out, grabbing at the things on the cushions. 'A gold piece of sweets

he has brought us, Ali's son.' And they sat down in a circle, looking at me while they munched and nibbled at the sweets before them. Meanwhile Hazi had left the room. She returned a few minutes later, bringing on a tray small cups of coffee and a pitcher of water for all of us.

Then they danced, one after the other they danced, while one of the women beat the tambourine, and we all clapped our hands.

'And why don't you dance?' I asked Hazi, quietly. But she repeated my words loudly, looking to Murad's wife for permission.

'He asked me why *I* don't dance.'

Murad's wife nodded her head, and forthwith Hazi began to dance. She danced so close to me, I felt the warmth from her bare brown legs and saw the glistening smoothness of her soft, well-grained arms and heard her deep intaking of breath. I sat down near her when she bowed low as a sign that she had finished dancing. The other women filed out of the room, smiling, laughing, joking, still biting into the hard, sweet pastes.

'Why have you done that?' Hazi asked. 'Why have you left the circle and come to sit near me?'

'Because the others are fat and old,' I answered.

'But you have offended them. You should not have come back in the middle of the day. Is Damascus a dog-ridden village that you should come back to the host's house before sundown?'

'No, but you are not where I can see you there. You are here.'

She resisted only feebly my attempt to kiss her.

'Now go, and don't come back before sundown!' she pushed my head down on a cushion, looked into my eyes, and darted away.

I went out again. When I passed Jusuph's stall, my father was there again, still bargaining for the pistols. Jusuph had gone down to four hundred and ninety-eight gold pieces, and father had gone up to one hundred and eighty. I was wondering about father. He hated long haggling. He always offered the price that was either accepted or rejected, never offering more than his first and only bid.

During the evening meal Murad said to father:

'I hear you are bargaining with Jusuph for the six pistols on his counter.'

'I am. His price is exorbitant.'

Hazi had meanwhile come in. She showed great interest in the discussions between the men. Later on in the evening she gave me to understand by the way she looked at me that she wanted to see me alone.

Murad was showing father some yataghans of great value when Hazi turned back from behind the rug of the doorway and looked at me.

I waited a few minutes, showing interest in this and that, thinking what excuse to offer for going out when Murad came to my rescue.

'Young people love to look at the moon. Art thou different?' he addressed me.

'Not at all,' I answered, and was out before they had begun to laugh.

Hazi was at the gate, crouching behind a wooden post.

I caught her by the shoulders.

'Hazi,' I whispered, 'you have called me.'

'You only listen with your ears in the strange lands whence you came; for otherwise you would have known that I called you last night. You make so much noise calling and want to be called so loudly! It's as if you desired the whole world to hear you being called. Have you no eyes?' she remonstrated when we had gone a stretch from the house. Suddenly, when I had leaned on her arm, she asked, 'Is your father going to buy the pistols?'

'He wants to.'

'Make him offer two hundred gold pieces tomorrow,' she begged. 'Can you do that?'

'He will offer that and more,' I assured her.

'No, not more. He should offer two hundred and no more.'

'Are you not wishing your father well?' I asked.

'You don't understand,' she answered impatiently. 'Just make your father do as I ask you to.'

I promised. It made her very happy. She

clapped her hands and laughed and jumped; hardly able to contain herself in her great joy. We walked on and on. She was telling me of her last visit to Deir al Zor. 'From there we went to Baalbek, where my married sister lives, and she took me down the Euphrates River, and we descended in a raft with the whole family to the Persian Gulf.' And while she told me all this she caught my hands in hers and pressed them to her hot face and covered me with her vivaciousness.

It was a very warm night. The winding, soft sand roads were deserted. From time to time the hooting of an owl or the flapping of a bat disturbed the stillness of the night. We were miles out of the gates of Damascus.

Suddenly my throat was parched. The heat was unbearable. The air was sticky.

'Allah!' Hazi cried out, panic-stricken. 'It's the Nefoud wind. We must run home. Hold on to my hand. Don't let go under any condition. Keep your eyes closed.'

But before we had gone very far, mountains of sand were rising before us, rising and disappearing with the same swift undulations as of waves on the ocean. And the sand sprays that blew like rain were hot, like fried cinders. From time to time I hesitated and remained stock-still, but always Hazi's hand pulled at mine, urging me forward. She may have spoken to me, but I could not hear her. The dull tumult of the sand-storm

had deafened me. I don't know how long we swam through the whirling sea of sand before Hazi had pressed me down, compelling me to lie face downward. Yet she did not let go of my hand. My body was rising and falling, as if it were on top of a wave. When the storm was over, hours later, we were but two hundred feet away from home.

When we had finally shaken off the sand from eyes and lips and ears, Hazi told me:

'It was the Nefoud storm that met the wind from the Tih Desert that comes stealing along the Jordan River. Allah was good to us. We were too far away from the house.'

I realized we had had a narrow escape. Had I been alone, it would have been my end. I wanted to tell her so, and more, but two lanterns appeared at a distance, and I heard father's voice calling my name.

'Remember, two hundred, not more,' Hazi said hastily. Then she answered, 'Here we are.'

Forgetting all Mohammedan reticence, the women of the harem, in different stages of undress, unveiled, came in to see us. Murad's wife called Jusuph's daughter to task. I took the blame. I explained how I had urged forward in spite of Hazi's arguments. The women began to wink at one another and look smilingly at Hazi.

She managed to turn around and look at me from

the portière; but though she did not say a word, I understood the message.

It was, 'Two hundred gold pieces, not more or less.'

Pained, hurt, I tossed on my bed the few remaining hours before daylight. I had not mistaken the meaning in her eyes. It was not, 'I love you.' It was, 'See that your father offers two hundred gold pieces, not less and not more.'

We had been in great danger during the Nefoud sand-storm; she had held on to my hand desperately. Was it only that I should live to tell my father to offer two hundred gold pieces for the six pistols? I tossed and tossed.

I felt like a traitor when I urged my father to offer the amount Hazi had suggested. Was it possible the pistols were not worth that much and that I was being used as a tool to fool my parent? But all suspicions left me when I saw her again that morning. Her gait, her eyes, her mouth, her voice, were all true. She could not be false and walk and look and smile so.

4

Father went directly to Jusuph's bazaar. After bidding one another good morning, they went at the bargaining again. Jusuph was telling the history of the weapons. A fantastic story, which father was picking to pieces without hesitation or consideration for the other man's feelings. In the

heat of the argument he called Jusuph a liar and other things. I left them at their haggling. The last I heard before leaving the bazaar was the merchant's cry:

'We have been merchants all our lives for generations. Never have we had such wares to sell. And never before have I met such a customer as you are. You want to buy an Arab stallion for the price of a dead mule.'

I tramped the town through, smoked narghiles, sipped the rich black coffee, joined in the street prayers of an old blind mullah who had just returned from the holy place, from Mecca, but I kept pretty close to the house of Murad. The hours slipped slowly. The shadow on the sun-dial in front of the minaret seemed fixed in one place. I longed for Hazi, for another hour with her in the desert, even if I had to go through another sand-storm. The danger was small compared to the joy, to the sensation, it gave me to hold her hand and feel her warmth.

I found father at home already. He was very tired from the day's haggling with Jusuph. He seemed spent.

'Two hundred was my last offer,' he told me.

'And what is now Jusuph's price?'

'Four hundred!' was his short reply.

Hazi took advantage on every occasion to touch my hands as she served the frugal meal to the three of us, father, Murad, and me.

At the end of the meal, unable to quiet my conscience, I asked my father:

'And are you sure they are worth two hundred gold pieces, those six pistols?'

'Of course I am. What do you say, Murad?' Murad answered with one eloquent gesture. It was as if he had said, 'Five times two hundred were not too much.'

Remembering what my host had said about the moon the previous evening, I stole out of the room. Hazi was at the gate again. 'You could not have done better,' she assured me joyously, wringing my hands.

'Why, my father would have offered more, perhaps; he wants to have those pistols.'

'No, he must not,' Hazi protested. 'Don't let him.'

'If you don't want your father to sell them, tell me. I shall ask my father not to go to your father's bazaar to-morrow.'

'It is not that at all. You don't understand. Do what I ask you. Tell him not to go above two hundred and twenty to-morrow.'

'Why? Why?' I asked. 'I shall tell him to offer what he thinks the utmost, and be done with the deal. It worries him.'

Hazi was frantic.

'You must not do that! You must not! If you -' she hesitated, but looked at me appealingly. I promised.

She was very sweet to me. She even let me kiss her, and she kissed me. Still, even while she kissed me, I felt that she did so for reasons of her own and not because of her love for me.

'Hazi,' I begged, 'tell me that you will come with me to the land I come from. I shall ask my father. We shall be married there or here, if you want to —'

'Will you tell your father not to go above two hundred and twenty?' she parried.

'I shall ask him to give your father the whole four hundred,' I cried enthusiastically.

'Then I shall not speak another word to you,' and she ran away.

I caught her as she fell face-downward on a sand-dune.

I promised anything she wanted. It was a maddening, balmy summer evening. The wafted odours from the breathing gardens, as if the finest incense was being burned; the soft, muffled noises of the hills and the distant rumblings of the city, blended, with the perfect deep blue of the sky and the moon and the stars, to madden me, to send my blood to the head. And that tantalizing, mysterious, strange creature near me, cold and passionate, naïve and all-knowing, penetrating, whose will I felt was stronger than mine, was telling me, 'Two hundred and twenty gold pieces; not one more or less.'

At the gate, on coming home, a young Arab was

standing near his horse. His *bashlik* (the hood of his striped cape) was pulled over his head. He looked at me furiously when he saw me near Hazi, and his eyes looked inquiringly at the girl.

'Talk to your father. I must speak with Akaab,' Hazi dismissed me. As I went toward the house, the windows of which shone dimly from the light of the candles burning inside, I saw Hazi and the Arab, leading his horse, walking slowly away toward the road.

5

'How do you like Damascus?' father asked smilingly while he undressed for bed. 'You seem to see more of that girl than of the city.'

'I like Damascus, but you don't see much of the town yourself. You go to Jusuph in the morning and stay there till sundown. Why don't you buy the pistols and be done with it? Or don't buy them, if they are not worth the price.'

I heard father's light laugh in the dark. In the quiet of the night I heard Hazi's voice and Akaab's remonstrances when they had returned to the gate. A little later I heard the hoof-beats getting fainter and fainter. He was going away. An outer door creaked softly. I heard a deep sigh. It was Hazi sighing. My heart shrank. Still later I heard her cry, and the women of the harem trying to comfort her, to quiet her.

I did not see her the following morning. She

avoided that part of the house in which we were. Father took me with him to show me an old mosque. At about noon, while we were eating in a restaurant, Jusuph came in, all flushed.

'Where have you been? I waited for you,' he asked angrily of my father.

'Sit down and have a cup of coffee with me, my friend,' father invited.

I was glad Jusuph had come. It gave me an excuse to leave the place. Calling a muleteer, I rode home. The house was quiet, as if dead. Where was Hazi? Was she ill? Was she still there? Had Akaab taken her away? I was insanely jealous of Akaab. Who was he? What was she to him?

After sundown father returned, accompanied by Murad. We had hardly seated ourselves on our heels about the table when Hazi appeared and began to serve us. I was happy again. But one look from her eyes made me understand that I had lost all favour, that I was in disgrace, that I was not going to like Damascus that evening.

I caught hold of her at the door. She freed herself violently:

'Your father has offered three hundred gold pieces,' she whispered angrily between her teeth.

I returned to the table and mused. She wants me to stay longer here. Akaab may have been somebody in her eyes before, but now — She cried last night because of me. He may have threat-

ened to kill me, and she had been in fear. I was not afraid of Akaab.

Yet she refused to see me. I waited at the gate one hour and another hour. Through the shutters of the windows the women were looking at me and laughing softly at my persistency and discomfiture.

Finally Murad came out and called me in.

'Akaab is one of the best shots, my son,' he said as he led me by the arm into the house.

Hoof-beats resounded in the distance. Then the muezzin's nasal voice called for prayers. It was Friday. Murad left the room.

Father did not let me out of his eyes the following day. He insisted that I go with him to the bazaars.

Jusuph, pale and worn, although he tried to act as imperturbable as a saint, refused to budge from his four hundred the whole forenoon. When we left, father cried from the door:

'You are taking advantage of my desire for these weapons. I am offering you three hundred and fifty, and not one silver piece will I give more.'

'And you want to take advantage of my evil days. I shall let them go for four hundred gold pieces less ten silver pieces. And not one silver piece less will I take.'

'Oh, are you at silver pieces now?' father remarked sarcastically. 'When you have changed your mind, Jusuph, come to see me. Not before.'

I shall show my son the town. I have spent too much time in your bazaar.'

'You have seen the most beautiful things in Damascus in my bazaar,' Jusuph retorted.

We wandered through the town. Before sundown we were again near the ruins of the ancestral home.

Father spoke incessantly and explained and instructed, but I heard little of what he said. My mind was with Hazi. I was thinking of her and Akaab, walking hand in hand through the night. Father was telling me an amusing anecdote about his grandfather when we reached the house of Murad.

Twice that evening Jusuph came to the house to talk to his daughter, and every time father had said to her: 'Ask him. Is he ready to sell for the price I have offered? No. I have no desire to see him.'

When Jusuph had left for the second time, the eyes of his daughter rested again benevolently, nay, lovingly, on me.

'And Akaab?' I asked Hazi at the gate.

'He has gone to the Daal Bek. Your father is a real effendi. What he has said he has said. He is a merchant. Do you think he will bid more?'

'I don't know. But it was harsh of him to refuse to see your father.' I tried to soften my parent's rudeness.

'No, it was not.'

'Don't you love your father, Hazi?'

'Love him. I love him more than anything or anybody in this world or the other,' she cried out passionately.

'My father has humiliated him. I am sorry, Hazi.'

'Your father is a merchant. So is my father. There is no humiliation. It is buying and selling.'

She did not encourage my love-making. She parried my words, my gestures. Then she suddenly changed her tactics. She pressed me close to her.

'Tell your father not to offer more, will you?' I promised, and her lips responded to mine. 'Will you come with me?' I asked. As light as a gazelle she skipped away and was indoors before I had had time to recover my senses.

We spent the following day at home. Father was very tired and wanted to rest. A dozen times during the day Jusuph had come running to the house, begging to see my father, and every time his daughter was sent to ask him, 'Is he ready to sell at my price?'

Jusuph came down another ten silver pieces, and then another ten and another ten. His eyes were feverish. He made several attempts to force his way into the house. He was in a state of terrible agitation. He cried, he gesticulated. The last time that day, after he had gone down fifty silver pieces, he called out aloud: 'Does that man want

to cut my throat? Is he not afraid Allah will punish him for his behaviour? Am I a dog to be kept outside?' He left with the hands raised above his head, denouncing my father to the women who looked through the latticed windows. 'A Chalfan's son. What better can one expect of the son of Abner and grandson of Khadir?'

Hazi was very pleased. She looked at me with her sparkling eyes. The firmer my father was, the more she hovered about him. She blew the coals of his narghile. She brought his sweets and cold water even when he did not ask her for any. Toward evening, when my father had paid her a compliment as she kneeled down to light his cigarette, she said:

'Offer him another ten gold pieces.'

'I shall,' father said, 'for your sake.' Her eyes lighted up. She kissed his hands.

Having won his favour, she no longer bothered about me. That night when I spoke to her she brushed me aside impatiently.

'Akaab is coming. It were better you remain indoors.'

And he came. I saw him walk down the road beside her, leading his horse.

Jusuph was offered ten more gold pieces through his daughter the following morning. I saw him get the news. His eyes opened wide. He was as excited as a better on the last stretch in a horse-race.

He came down another ten silver pieces, and left proudly after conversing quietly with his daughter. Then Hazi came in and hovered about my father without even looking at me.

'Let us pack up and leave,' I urged my father. 'I have seen all I want to see of Damascus. It is a city of merchants and hagglers. I hate Damascus. Let us leave.'

'As you wish. In two days we leave.'

I began to pack our things. Instantly Hazi became interested. She looked at me.

'My son wishes us to go,' father told her. It made me happy to see her look at me appealingly. It was well she should know my wish had weight with my father. I saw tears in her eyes when she left the room. It was my turn not to give her occasion to speak to me alone. I scarcely looked at her when she turned around at the doorway. I was busy packing.

A sand-storm was swirling over the city. It kept us indoors the whole day.

It got dark very early in the afternoon. The mules brayed loudly, and the camels coughed their shrill cries of distress. Blasts of sand were pounding at the walls and doors and windows as if thrown by invisible hands.

That night Murad asked his women to dance before us. They went through all the contortions to the sound of the tambourine while the storm raged incessantly. Hazi waited for me to ask her

to dance, but I did not. The heat in the tightly closed house was unbearable. In the midst of the dance Jusuph, pale and worn, appeared, bringing the pistols under his coat. Murad looked thunderstruck. Father smiled happily. The women were asked to leave. Jusuph put the pistols before father, inviting him to look at them again. Then he proceeded to describe each one in the most eloquent way, fondling, caressing, patting the steel of the barrels as tenderly as if they were his own children he was confiding to a stranger.

‘What say you now, Ali ben Abner ben Khadir?’

‘We are leaving town in two days. I shall give you three hundred and seventy gold pieces, and may my years be shorter with one year for every gold piece I give you more,’ father answered.

Murad approved. Jusuph began to lower his price by single silver pieces. He spoke in silver pieces only as a hint that there was a way to evade the oath father had taken. Till late into the night he remained. When he left the room he had come down to three hundred and seventy-five gold pieces.

Hazi was at the doorway watching the contest.

‘Why do you want to leave so soon?’ Hazi managed to ask me.

‘Do you want me to serve for target-practice to Akaab, or do you want me to help your father in the selling of the pistols? Which of the two?’ I queried sarcastically.

She put her hands on my mouth.

'Say not another word. You know not the truth.' She went to her quarters. She returned soon under some pretext. 'My heart bleeds to have hurt you, son of Ali.' But when she saw me relenting she asked rapidly, 'Do you think your father will reconsider and offer more?'

'Not if I know my father,' I answered. She skipped away.

6

'Where is Hazi?' I asked one of the women the following day.

'She wants to be near her father to-day.'

I did not see her that evening. We were to leave the following afternoon. Before sunrise Jusuph was at the door. He carried the pistols with him. He talked again and showed them.

'Only five more gold pieces and they are yours.'

'I have no desire to shorten my life for a piece of steel, Jusuph.'

'What is life without what one desires?' the merchant countered.

'Were I to want them, were I the buyer, of a certainty words I had uttered in barter would not stand between me and what I desired.'

Father was adamant. His eyes glistened with desire as he looked at the pistols. His hands pressed passionately on them, and his fingers caressed fondly the curves of the handles.

‘What I have said, I have said.’

Jusuph talked eloquently. He brought examples from the Koran, from the holy book, the holiest, that such an oath as father had taken was worthless. When he had failed to break down father’s resolution on that ground he spoke sophistically of the voluptuousness of pain and fear.

‘Great passions are always forbidden passions. What is allowed and good may be right, but it offers no great joy. Why, Ali ben Abner ben Khadir, think of the sensation at the sight and feel of these weapons! You will know that they cost you not only three hundred and seventy-five gold pieces, but also five years of your own life. And they will be far more precious to you because of that. I envy your pleasure in them. You will love them with the pain of great love; as loves one who has fallen wounded battling for the conquest of his beloved one. As a voluptuary you could not have done better than taking that oath and breaking it afterward.’

Never had I heard more eloquent, more convincing talk. He looked like an inspired man. Murad and I and father and Hazi literally hung on his lips. He spoke profoundly, wisely. As if waiting to hear great words that were to convert us to some new belief, to some new religion, we listened intently, awestruck with expectation.

‘What I have said, I have said.’ He would not be convinced.

Jusuph left the house like a martyr, a saint, that had cried in the wilderness.

Father was pale and unsteady on his feet. It was clear he regretted the oath he had taken not to offer more than that sum of gold pieces. The hour of our departure approached. Suddenly I had an idea.

'I have five gold pieces of my own. I can give them to him, and so what you have said is said, and you will have the pistols,' I cried, hugging myself to my father's breast.

'You are as good a son as Hazi is a daughter,' my father answered, 'but it cannot be. We must leave instantly.'

'Hazi!' I called.

She appeared.

'Take these five gold pieces to your father as a present from me and let him come immediately.'

She trembled. Father put his hand on my shoulders.

'Put your gold pieces in your pocket. The mules are here. Come,' he urged.

'But, Father, Father,' I begged, 'let me do that for you!'

'Come; we leave.'

Murad and his wives had bidden us godspeed earlier in the day. My pain for my father's anguish was stronger than my love for Hazi. I was hardly thinking of her when we left.

When we had passed the gates of Damascus astride our mules, I asked father:

'Why have you not allowed me to help you? Should five pieces of gold stand between you and your desire?'

'Now I will tell you,' father answered. 'These pistols don't belong to Jusuph. They are Murad's heirlooms, and are not for sale at any price; but as Jusuph is a merchant by nature, he pays rent to keep them in his bazaar, just so as to have something to haggle about, to keep alive. His daughter Hazi serves Murad for the rent of those pistols. I have given Jusuph a fine battle. Fancy how dangerously near I was to accede to his price!'

'And you have known it all the time?'

'I had heard about it through a friend of mine five years ago. It was why I wanted to come to Damascus. Too bad he has fallen on such evil days! He is a great merchant.'

'And, Hazi, Father? Hazi?'

'She will serve Murad for the rent of those pistols as long as her father lives. She loves her father.'

I returned to Damascus five years later. Jusuph was still selling those six pistols. Hazi served Murad for them. Then Akaab died. Hazi shot him while he was attempting to stab me, treacherously coming up from behind.

The other day I heard myself saying to our son: 'Come to Damascus. Come to Damascus, the old city of Damascus.'

Come to Damascus, the old city of Damascus!
The sand-laden wind of the desert polishes the

tops of the mushroom-like, flat, round towers. Patches of gold glitter in the sun, when the sirocco, the wind of the desert, has ceased. Come to the city of the caliphs, Damascus, the most beautiful city of the world.

Happiness

ONLY a few miles southward from the Panama Canal – not far from one of the peaks from which Balboa first saw the Pacific Ocean – runs the Camino Real, the road that Cortez with his men bored through the Darien jungle. It is a cobblestone path six feet wide, emerging and losing itself for miles and miles in the tropical wilderness of crossed vegetation that defies all researches. A riot of foliage and fruit of all colours and savour, poisonous and golden cherries twining themselves around luscious blue plums, yellow and red mangoes, the taste of which lingers for months with the one who has first eaten them.

At the very beginning of this road the old Blas Indian, Perez, sunning his wrinkled face and bare leather-brown limbs in front of a low hut which is as much a part of the jungle as he himself is, tells the passers-by the story of Paquita. It is from him, Perez Mendoza, half Spanish and the other half a mixture of a half dozen races through which the Indian predominates, it is from his mouth that I have heard the story of Paquita.

'A lonely child was Paquita. She was born a little while after the French had come here to make a ditch between the two seas in defiance of the will of the Great Spirit. Their men came

from their homes far away, full of vigour and youth. We saw them passing by our hut after sundown, strutting about, laughing at our lazy ways, curious, insolent, like children. After work, instead of resting, they danced, sang, gorged themselves with fire water. A few months of such life, carousing when they should have rested, and they lay down to die here, if the boat that brought new young men to take their place was too packed with too many dying to take them back home. You will find to-day many of our young people with blood of these people in their veins. And they, too, die too early in life. For life here should be lived as the jungle wills it. With slowness and much sleep. On little food and little water. Our women were captivated by them. They were gentle of speech and easy of manner. And lavish were they with their gold and trinkets beyond anything our women had ever seen.

'And thus Paquita was born. When she was very young and after her mother's death the old missionary who lived on the track to Nombre de Dios took care of her. And a gentle child she was, doing many services and learning still more things to do when she should grow up. And she was fair of face as her father had been, but she inherited the shape of her mother's eyes, her mother, daughter of our people, and the deep black lustre of our people's hair.

'But one day when she was only half the size of a grown-up woman the jungle spoke to her. The jungle speaks only to her native children. To those who understand her what she says is law. And so one day, after sunset, Paquita appeared before the hut of a man whose wife had many children. That hut was in the middle of the jungle, a day's journey from the missionary's home. The man looked at her. Then he called his wife and they both looked at her. She wore a little cross dangling from her neck. The missionaries had been good to that man's people. He wanted to take Paquita back from where he knew she had run away. But his wife looked into the child's eyes and said, "She shall stay with us, for the jungle has spoken to her."

'And on the following day Paquita went through the jungle with the other children to gather food and she knew as well as they, although she had never been fruit hunting, which fruit was edible and which not. And the wood hen could not hide from her eyes. Neither could the rabbit. Before the week was over she had caught more parakeets than all her little friends together. And the long-tailed monkeys she had trapped were so many their twitter disturbed the sleep of the people that had taken her in.

'Twice the old missionary came to see her, trying to persuade her to return to the big wooden house where food was aplenty and where no rain

came through the roof. While he spoke to her the blood of her father responded to the soul of his words, but her mother's blood was always stronger when he ceased to speak. Once she went with him, following his footsteps with bowed head. But midway the jungle spoke to her. She answered with a loud cry and ran back to the mud hut which was dear to her because it held more of herself than his words. Far more a part of herself than the home of the good old man in the long black coat.

'And she was not the only one to whom such a thing happened. For there were many children of partly pale blood who came back into the fold of their mother's people. In our people the mother's blood speaks the stronger tongue. You can see their offspring walking through the city in the daytime, associating, dealing, and trading with the white men now here; some of them with deep-set eyes, as blue as the Caribbean Sea, and curly hair matting low as that of the black people who came much later to help dig the ditch between the seas. You can see men with slanting eyes and yellow, sallow faces, as that of the Chinese, in heads that stand square and squat upon Indian shoulders. You can see them everywhere in the daytime from Nombre de Dios to Cristobal.

'But at night long ere the sun has set their feet wend southward. The voices of the jungle speak to them, call them along the Camino Real; in

parts accessible only to those guided by their mothers' blood, they build their huts to sleep in, to live in; white man, Chinese, black in daytime; jungle man after sunset.

'Then, one Spring, a new feeling stirred the blood of Paquita. She had grown big and sturdy. It was mating Spring for her.

'Not far from Paquita's own hut lived two brothers who were also of partly pale blood, Spaniola. They were neither of them much older than Paquita, there being only a year between them. Of the two, Roderiguez was the elder; Carlos was the younger. And although the two brothers were of the same mother and same father, different bloods of previous generations echoed through them. And in height and manner they were also different.

'Their father had died when they were very young. Because of the blood of a grandmother, their many little sisters knew less about the gathering of food than any children of the jungle. It was the two brothers who maintained the women of the hut and kept the larder full of food, which they brought mostly from town. And cloth and dress had to be brought to them, for they knew not how to weave. And lovers of meat they were, all of them; meat from tame cattle Yet they were hunters, the two boys; hunters of a different kind. They would go into the jungle, gather green para-

keets, trap monkeys, find mackaws, and then bring them to town for sale to the sailors and such who stopped for a few hours before their boats crossed the ditch between the seas.

'And of the two brothers, Roderiguez was the more successful, both in hunting and selling. For, long ere the day was ended, Carlos, discouraged, waiting for a buyer of his parakeets, would return home and sit in front of the hut to muse with himself or play with the monkeys he had captured. Roderiguez would stay until after sundown at the market-place, always the first there and the last to leave, spying and catching the eyes of customers, talking to them, following them, insisting until they were cajoled into buying what he had to sell.

'Not so Carlos. If some one came to purchase a pair of his green little birds he would merely state the price and look away, as if it were an unimportant matter to him whether or not the man actually bought the birds, or as if he actually regretted parting with his pets. And the people in the market-place, selling coco-nuts and mangoes, parrots and monkeys, strips of meat and dried fish, would shake their heads and say, "Two brothers who are not like two brothers."

'And if the day was unusually balmy Carlos would not leave the jungle at all; he would forget market and parakeets and stretch himself under a tree to sleep and dream.

'Yet with all Roderiguez's advantages people always liked Carlos better; even his mother did. A way he had with him, a manner of saying things, that seemed to come from a greater depth and always reached greater heights than when anyone else said the same things. There was greater weight in his words. And he could tell more tales about what happened to birds and trees and what monkeys twittered to one another than tales that could be told about human beings. And children and old men in the market-place liked to ask him: "Anything new in the jungle to-day?" Knowing well that for him the jungle was much more alive and much more pregnant with meaning than what happened to the traders in town or the news that came from the boats of distant seas.

'And so Paquita met the two brothers one day on the way to the market-place. She carried on one of her shoulders a large cage full of birds and on the other shoulder a bundle of coco-nuts and plantains, which she carried to town, as the man who brought her up was then too ill to go himself. Roderiguez was the first to speak to her. He asked her whether she had ever been to market before. When she told him it was her first trip he promised to show her the most advantageous place in the market. Not at the beginning of the row, but in the middle of it, was his advice.

"Women seldom buy what they see first; and still more seldom what they see last. But when they return and are midway, whether they came from one end of the street or the other, they are more apt to acquire what they need before they have reached the other end."

"You certainly know the ways of women," Paquita said, as she looked him fully in the face.

"I do," Roderiguez answered, looking insolently down at her bare feet and gliding his gaze along her naked arms and shoulders.

"The blood came to Paquita's face. Then he began to speak about himself. How he was the best seller, how he recognized a buyer from afar, how he had once received five silver dollars for a pair of parakeets which he usually sold for only half a silver piece. One had to know how to size up the Americanos if one wanted to be a trader. Then he showed her his silver watch and many other trinkets he had bought with his money. All this impressed Paquita very much. She, too, craved for more meat than the people she lived with ate. It is a way with young people of pale blood at a certain time of the year. One could never buy meat from money earned selling to Panamaists. He looked so much stronger than Carlos, had so much more self-assurance, was much more neatly dressed. And he was glib of tongue.

"While Roderiguez spoke to her Carlos walked

behind. But she felt his gaze, as if rays of the sun were falling on her back and neck. It was very sweet to be admired that way, mutely worshipped. But the other one was a man, a man who spoke of deeds! Suddenly Carlos stepped up and, putting his hand upon the heavier bundle Paquita carried, he said, "I am not half as heavily loaded as you are. Let me carry it."

'Listening to Roderiguez, Paquita had not noticed how tired she was. Her bundle slipped out of her hand before she knew what had become of it. Having taken her burden, Carlos again dropped behind. Yet; somehow, Roderiguez's glibness left him. Instead of speaking to Paquita, he turned his head from time to time at his brother. And there was great hatred in his eyes. She could hear Carlos singing under his breath a song that had come from across the seas into the jungle. After a while, to break the monotony, she began the conversation herself. Yet, while she spoke to Roderiguez, she kept on thinking of Carlos, who, though not as strong and forward as Roderiguez, seemed to be more, more in a way that she could not grasp. She also felt distinctly that Roderiguez resented the other's goodness, as if it were a bad and treacherous trait.

'Roderiguez recovered his self-assurance by the time they reached the market-place. There

he was in his best element. Shouldering and elbowing, he occupied his favourite place, and turned and argued so much with some old women that he made a place for Paquita near him. When they were fully settled Carlos passed slowly by, still in quest of a place in the market building. How different he was from his bustling, busy brother!

'At sunrise the market was in full swing. Foreigners who had arrived the previous night on a boat bought indiscriminately things they needed. Eventually Carlos had occupied a place in the remote corner of the market.

"There stands my brother," Roderiguez laughed. "I am at my third sale, and he has not opened his mouth to call a passing customer." And, though he was busy showing off his mon-keys to customers, Roderiguez helped Paquita to sell her stuff, always obtaining higher prices than she had thought possible for that which she had to sell.

'At siesta time Roderiguez asked Carlos: "Sold anything?"

"Not a centavo's worth."

"And I two pesos. Even Paquita has sold almost a peso's worth of her fruit."

"You are luckier than I am," Carlos answered.

"Luckier, or -"

'His tongue was ready for a harsher word, for he was angry with his brother for the manner

in which he had taken up Paquita's burden that morning. But a half glance from the girl had stopped him in the middle of the sentence.

"This isn't my lucky day," Carlos laughed. "I shall return home presently."

Roderiguez shrugged his shoulder deprecatingly, but inwardly he was glad his brother was leaving him alone with the maiden for the homeward journey through the dark of the jungle.

He made great strides, Roderiguez, after sunset, into the heart of the girl. He impressed her greatly with his ability to earn money. With his courage. With his strength. Paquita's hut was about a mile below the hut of the two brothers. The sun had gone down when Roderiguez, talking and laughing with the girl, passed it by. Twice he had stopped in front of the Chinese hut stores, strewn along the Camino Real, and bought sweets for her.

He left his empty monkey cage in front of the hut, while she waited for him to accompany her home. His mother looked at them and knew her son had found a mate. Paquita was captivated by him. She felt that. She knew it by the way she looked at him. It was the mate look. The old mother looked at them as he swung along beside her.

"Listen: who is singing?" Paquita asked suddenly. A deep, sweet voice was rising from behind the trees.

“It is that good-for-nothing brother of mine. He either sings or dreams. Why, he lets the most beautiful birds fly away just because they are so beautiful. Never thinks of the price they would fetch from the Americanos. Wonder how he would provide for a wife!”

“He sings beautifully,” Paquita said, after listening for a few moments.

Roderiguez did not reply, and the two walked on in silence until they reached her hut.

“*Buenas noches*,” he said to her as he turned around. When he had gone a few paces she called after him: “I am going to the market again to-morrow.”

The following morning the two brothers met Paquita on the road leading to town. Again Carlos lagged behind, but Roderiguez was careful to take on his shoulder part of Paquita’s burden. This act of gallantry re-established Roderiguez in Paquita’s eyes. After a while she slowed up her steps so that Carlos could catch up with them.

“You need not lag behind, signor, as though you were the weakest of us,” Paquita taunted him, “for I have seen with what ease you carried your burden and mine yesterday.”

Satisfied with his supremacy over Paquita, Roderiguez had no ill-feeling now toward his brother, who was weaving beautiful tales and

telling wonderful stories to the girl between them; quite the contrary. He took pride in possessing such a brother, and said so to Paquita. A little later he regretted that she paid more attention to Carlos than to himself. But as they approached the market-place, meeting white-dressed women and swarthy men in tan trousers held to the hips by wide red sashes, who carried their goods there, hearing with what respect they addressed the successful Roderiguez and with what authority he spoke of boats that were to arrive at such and such an hour; as the bustle increased as they approached the town, Carlos' advantage in her eyes diminished in proportion as Roderiguez's grew.

'For it is one thing to be a pleasant weaver of tales and a songster on the road and another to be a good tradesman in the market-place. And while listening to songs and tales may be pleasant after the work is done, a woman knows that she cannot be nourished by them. And that her children would starve if the man carried his tales and songs to the market-place instead of his goods and wits. And Paquita was at her mating time, when a woman looks at a man as the father of her future children. A man knows that. It is why he does his utmost to have great gains while courting a woman. She forgot all about Carlos during the day. He did not leave earlier than his brother that after-sunset. When the two

counted their gains Carlos' nearly amounted to that of his brother.

'They walked home in silence together. Roderiguez seemed to be angered by the fact that his brother, who excelled him in so many things, should almost equal him in the one thing he was the superior. And although Carlos would not take any pride in the fact, Paquita felt the enmity between the two silent brothers and understood the reason. And she took inward pride in the fact that a man's character was being changed by her. And in the silence of the jungle she thought to herself if Carlos could be as good a provider as his brother and yet keep all his other qualities he certainly would be a more desirable mate than Roderiguez. For there were months and months of rain during which a man could not leave his hut at all. And the nights were long, too. It would be pleasant then to have a man near her who could sing songs and weave tales instead of one who would sit and moan over lost trade, unable to help the time pass, unable to be otherwise happy than at the market-place.

'There were many things she liked in Roderiguez. A sort of manly brutality. But there were many more things she liked in Carlos. And she weighed all this as she walked homeward with them. When they passed their own hut the two brothers stopped simultaneously. Roderi-

guez, after having made certain that Carlos would remain at home, continued the way to Paquita's hut. None of them said a word. Before the enclosure Roderiguez said "*Buenas noches*" and waited for Paquita to tell him whether or not she would go to town the following day. After a little while he inquired her intentions.

"*Mañana*," she answered, and shrugged her shoulders. And he knew from her shrug, eloquent in its indecision, that "*mañana*" (to-morrow) might mean weeks, months, years, perhaps.

'They spoke not a word, the two brothers, during the meal that night. Carlos played with his younger sisters and teased the monkeys. Roderiguez took down his machete and walked out. A little later they in the hut heard the dull thud of the heavy knife against the chopping block not far from the door. For years this had been Roderiguez's expression of dissatisfaction when something happened to counter his desires.

"What has happened?" the mother inquired of Carlos.

"If I knew what had happened to put him into that mood, then I would be like him."

'But the mother instinctively sensed the trouble.

"He is angry with you, Carlos. If he dared, that machete would fall on your body as frequently as he throws it against the trees. You have crossed him on his way to find a mate."

“*Quien sabe?*” answered Carlos. “Maybe only because I sold only eight centavos less than he to-day! For though my brother always teases when I do not sell enough, he is angry when he does not retain his superiority over me as a trader.”

‘The following day Roderiguez was alone in the market, for neither Carlos nor Paquita appeared. He would have liked Paquita to have been there. She would have had the privilege to see real ability. For while hardly anyone had disposed of anything, because of the heavy rain that day, he had made his way to a boat loaded with Americanos and disposed of almost everything he had had for sale. Then he had returned to town, obtained some trinkets, and sold the greater part of them to the same people. A day such as he had had was seldom known in his life, for he returned home with fifteen silver dollars in his pocket.

“Where is Carlos?” he inquired of his mother.

“Somewhere in the jungle. I heard his voice not long ago.”

‘A week later Roderiguez met Paquita again. It did not take them long to renew their friendship, and as Carlos was not with him, Roderiguez enjoyed supremacy over her even more than before. By the time they returned home, after sunset, he was sure by the way she looked at him that he had defeated Carlos. So certain was he

indeed that he praised his brother for his song-making and story-spinning ability.

'During the following days Paquita went every morning to market. Even when she had nothing for sale she followed Roderiguez there, standing near him, watching and helping him. And the people in the market now called her his "*fidanzata*."

'Though the days were beautiful, Carlos stayed at home. Roderiguez became more and more forward in spite of Paquita's forbidding attitude. He stole kisses. He tried to encircle her waist with his arms. While at market or on the road, she knew no man whose company she preferred more. Yet when she met Carlos, Carlos idle, Carlos singing when he should have been working, surely the worst provider a woman could have for herself and offspring, all her calculations about Roderiguez's advantages would suddenly dwindle from her mind.

'The soul of the poor girl was torn to shreds. Some of her blood and all of her heart attracted her to the youth she loved, and some of her blood and her mind directed her toward the man who could provide for her during the days when she should be unable to do so for herself and offspring. For there is always an angel and a merchant in every woman. A woman is more truthful to herself when she loves than a man, for her life depends more upon him than his depends upon hers. It is as it should be.

‘One day Roderiguez confided to Paquita that he had saved four hundred silver dollars, “to build a hut with,” he said as he looked into her eyes. “For the woman I marry shall never suffer cold damp when it rains.”

‘And a white bed on which were painted yellow and golden flowers, and a big mirror, and a richly-coloured shawl, and several rugs he had selected with which to furnish the hut, “if a certain woman should think me worthy enough to marry me.” And it was a great temptation for Paquita to look into his eyes in a certain way and answer him with or without words. For a woman talks best when she says not a word. For the roof of the hut where she lived leaked, and there was neither bed nor table in that hut. And the only mirror she had was the one she kept in one of the thousand folds of her coloured dress.

‘“And a comb for her hair, I shall buy for that woman. A comb a foot tall, black and silver studded. And a fan of black lace. And slippers with red heels. So that when she comes to town with me the people on the street will point her out and say, “There goes the wife of Roderiguez Venasquez.” So he spoke. For the people of Spanish blood are very vain.

‘It was tempting. Very tempting. “I have no doubt the woman will be happy with you,” Paquita answered after a pause, her mind gain-

ing over her, but her heart instantly running back to Carlos. Ah! if he could have saved money, and if he could furnish a hut as Roderiguez promised, sure she would be happier with his love. She knew Carlos loved her. But what was he doing instead of saving money for setting up a hut and beautifying the woman he loved? He was dreaming in the jungle and singing. He was weaving tales when he should be out and bustling. His wife would have to go half naked, with no comb in her hair and no red-slippered feet. Happy, but starving nevertheless. Cold and wet. Ah, if Carlos were only more like his brother!

'Roderiguez was angered that she did not give him a more definite reply to his vague speech, so he did not speak to her that day. That's the curse of mixed bloods. One speaks like a Spaniard, then acts like an Indian. On some pretext or other she left the market at midday. Roderiguez was sure she went to keep a tryst with his brother. That evening he found them sitting near each other on a boulder. Carlos' head was bowed, as Paquita talked earnestly, her body rocking to and fro, bending over him, trying hard to convince him of something.

'And so, during the next few weeks she would sometimes be friendly with Roderiguez and then turn to Carlos. The mother of the boys, fearing violence between the two brothers, decided to

take a hand in the affair. The whole town knew what was going on. In the huts of the Darien jungle people spoke of nothing else. Some favoured one, others the other, and all condemned the girl. There were many other girls arrived at mating time that spring. And both brothers would have been welcome to many a hut.

'As the three were together one day, the mother boldly stepped before them.

' "They are both my sons, Paquita, and I love them both. If thou lovest one of them, speak out so that the other will look elsewhere for his mate. For along the Camino Real from Nombre de Dios to Balboa there are hundreds of maidens who would be willing to marry either of them. And if thou hast come to bring love, give it to the one for whom thou hast it; before either of them is too bitter to know what love is."

'And then Paquita said what was in her heart:

' "Sometimes I think I want to marry Roderiguez, for he is brave, strong, a good trader, and would be a good provider for his hut. I am weary of poverty. It has been with me ever since I came to the jungle. Before that I was in a house that never leaked, slept in a good soft bed, and had all the meat I craved. And then at other times I like Carlos better, for he has ways with him that make me feel he could be an older sister to me. Yet how can I think of marrying him

when he spends his days idly in the forest, and has nothing that he can call his own to give me except his heart and soul? So a thought comes to me now. In two moons the heavy rains will begin again. Roderiguez now has enough to build a hut and to furnish it. But if Carlos can do likewise before the two moons are up, I shall marry him."

'After saying this, Paquita left the hut of the two brothers. Anyone who would have heard Roderiguez's loud laughter would have understood how sure he was that he had won. Where could Carlos lay his hands upon so much money in so short a time! So sure was he, indeed, that the following day he went to the merchant and priced the bed and the mirror, the shawl, the comb, and the red-heeled slippers. All this would just about dispose of the money he had saved up. But there were two months ahead of him in which to save enough money to build the hut. Indeed, he began to clear the ground for it, not far from his mother's hut, as soon as he came home that evening, having added a few more pesos to his savings.

'And what was Carlos doing? Carlos was in the jungle.

'A few days later Paquita passed by and saw Roderiguez working. A few days after that he was shaping bricks for the hut. He was planning a very spacious one. For he expected a large

brood of children in the years to come. He had plans to acquire wealth and to plant and to deal on a large scale.

'And where was Carlos? Carlos was in the jungle.

'Paquita heard him singing mournful songs. Mourning what was yet alive. Mourning when he should have been singing of life and tackling it. She saw his shadow between the trees. She knew how much he loved her. She knew how much he desired her to be his, yet he made no effort to win her, while his brother was working steadily toward that end, raising the hut higher and higher.

'A full moon had passed. All but the roof was ready of the hut that Roderiguez was building. He went to market earlier than ever, and returned later. Every spare moment he had he was busy building his hut. From time to time Carlos would act on a spurt of energy and do wonders in the jungle and the market. In one single day he had caught over fifty parakeets. Another day he trapped four monkeys. Paquita's breast rose and fell as if an inner bellows swelled the pipes inside her throat. But then he would relax again and instead of calling on customers he would spend his days talking to the little beasts and insects in the trees, or play with the naked children of the gutter, giving them cen-

tavos to buy sweets, instead of saving every copper he obtained.

'Roderiguez was now working at the windows of his hut. Paquita resigned herself. More and more she became convinced of Carlos' worthlessness. She was not going to be fed and clothed on dreams and songs and little acts of kindness. One needs bread and meat for the upkeep of the body.

'Ten days before the two months are up Roderiguez met Paquita quite accidentally on the Camino Real.

'“I have built my hut. It is all ready. I can buy all the things I spoke of and some which I have held back as a surprise. I shall buy a shawl for my mother and cotton to make dresses for my little sisters, pay the priest for the wedding, spend fifty silver pieces on the wedding feast, and still have one hundred silver pieces above that the morning after our marriage.”

'It was indeed a wonderful accomplishment. If Carlos had only been able to do half of that! That evening Paquita deliberately went to meet Carlos.

'“The two moons are soon up. A few more days and the rain will begin to fall. What have you done?”

'“A hundred pesos is all that I have saved,” Carlos answered.

'“Don't you love me?” Paquita insisted.

“I do, and that much greater is my sorrow. But my brother is better at trade. Indeed, he has accumulated eight times as much as I.”

“And couldn’t you do that for me?” Paquita said, her voice trembling with rage. “You have squandered your time. I have seen you give away money to the worthless gutter children.”

‘Carlos mused aloud: “Into Roderiguez’s pocket silver pieces rain. From mine they leak out. I start out to market. On the way something stops me and I remain in the midst of the jungle. To watch monkeys play. Birds mate. Watch them instead of catching them and bringing them to market. There are many other things I do of which I am ashamed to speak. Many a silver piece is flying free and happy among the trees, on green wings, instead of buying beads from the Chinese store and trinkets from the Hindu traders in Balboa.”

“And you say you love me,” Paquita repeated in disgust. She was angry that the man she loved had not become more practical for her sake.

“Is it with songs that you want to feed your children? And do you expect tales to make bricks for your hut?” she hurled at him as she ran away.

‘Carlos watched her run. Never before had he seen her so beautiful. Never before had her movements appeared to him so graceful. Stirred deeply by the anger she showed, because she loved him so much, that night, instead of lying down to sleep,

he went into the jungle deeper than he had ever been. He wanted to be alone, away from all and everything. He did not sleep. He did not dream. He lay on the ground, face downward, in a stupor.

'When the bluish-red dawn came he raised his eyes. Before him on a low, wild plaintain branch, stood somnolent a big bird, the size of a hen and the colour of blood, with black beak and blue feet; the like of which he had never before seen in his life. Instantly he remembered tales of the blood mackaw, the bird so rare he had thought it existed only in the tales of the people. The blood mackaw, which lived only in the hottest places where the rays of the sun are like living fire tongues.

'He stretched out his hand and grabbed the feet of the bird before it had raised its wings. It struggled feebly. It was too cold. The blood of the bird was yet too thick. It tried sluggishly to sink its beak into his hand, but after Carlos had stroked its head gently it subsided and showed no fight when he placed a string on one of its legs.

'There in that red bird was the hut, and the bed, and the comb, and the mirror, and the shawl, and the fee of the priest, and all that Paquita desired. He hurried to the market before even going home. Even before Carlos had arrived at the market-place everybody knew that Carlos Venasquez had caught a blood mackaw. All the stalls were aban-

doned, even the Syrians and the Chinese left their stands and stores to come and gaze at the most wonderful bird that had ever been seen in that part of the country.

“A blood mackaw! A blood mackaw! Carlos Venasquez has caught a blood mackaw!”

Paquita arrived breathless and cleaved her way through the multitude to Carlos. It was a great effort for her not to throw her arms around the boy's neck. For not only did the blood mackaw represent all that she desired, but it was also a good omen, people had said. One of the Chinese traders looked at the bird carefully, then, to the astonishment of the multitude, he offered a hundred silver pieces for it.

“One hundred pesos for the blood mackaw!” echoed through all the market. Roderiguez was a little pale but full of confidence. Even if Carlos should get twice that much, he would still not have enough.

“Take the hundred pesos, Carlos,” he insisted, almost ready to close the bargain for his younger brother.

Paquita looked on bewildered, but Carlos gently pushed the money away. “I want more than that for the blood mackaw. Much more!”

Paquita's heart swelled with pride. So finally Carlos was becoming a trader. A provider. He was trying to get more money.

“One hundred and twenty-five!” shouted a

Syrian trader. Still the boy shook his head negatively.

“One hundred and fifty!” called out Hussein, the Hindu dealer, who had come running from his store at the news of the blood mackaw that was for sale at the market-place. Still Carlos shook his head.

“I want more than that for the blood mackaw!” And the firmer he resisted the old temptations the prouder and happier Paquita grew. At the end of the day, as the Chinese trader had decided to offer another twenty-five silver pieces, and Hussein the Hindu merchant had bettered that sum with a like amount, the offer for the bird was two hundred silver pieces. Still Carlos refused to sell.

“Why don’t you tell your brother to take the two hundred silver pieces?” the Syrian merchant addressed Roderiguez.

“There is no telling,” Roderiguez answered sarcastically, and loud enough for Paquita to hear. “He might want to make of him an expensive meal for himself. Or teach him to sing one of his songs.”

That night, as they returned home, none of them spoke a word. The two brothers accompanied her to the door of her hut, and when she turned around to bid good night she said, “*Buenas noches*, Roderiguez,” and “*Buenas noches*, Carlos,” without betraying her feeling to one or the other. For even if Carlos were to get the two hundred

silver pieces, he would still not have enough to fulfill the arrangement between them. After thinking the matter over carefully, Paquita came to the conclusion that the finding of the blood mackaw was only an accident. That one could not expect such things to happen frequently enough to provide for a family. While Roderiguez did not have to wait for such lucky accidents. He had amassed the small fortune he possessed, plodding day by day, working hard to earn it, from early morning to late at night. And so still the balance, in Paquita's mind, was in his favour, and it outweighed the balance of her heart which weighed in Carlos' favour.

'There was very little talk in the brothers' hut that night. Roderiguez took down his machete again and the dull thud of his hewing at the block was heard until late after midnight. Early in the morning Carlos departed for the market with his bird under his arm. Paquita followed only a few steps behind ; Roderiguez a half hour later.

'The excitement of the people had by that time cooled. Many wondered if the offer of Hussein's two hundred silver pieces still held good. From time to time some one did stop to look at the bird, but no other offer was made that day. Who could offer better than two hundred pesos? So few people owned that much! Paquita stood at a dis-

tance, hardly speaking a word to anyone, only approaching Carlos' stand when some one came near it to look at the bird. Carlos looked intently at the bird's beautiful blood-red feathers and examined closely the beautiful weave and texture of the large wingspread.

'About midday, from a newly arrived boat, a young Americano and his wife came on a sight-seeing trip through the market-place. The sight of the mackaw arrested the attention of both of them at once. As they approached Carlos' stand the woman became very excited over the beauty of the bird. Instantly Paquita and the other people became alive to the possibilities of an unparalleled price that might be obtained from these apparently very wealthy people.

"How much?" inquired the man.

"Five hundred dollars gold," Carlos answered, without batting an eyelash. Paquita's expression of wonderment was so loud and emphatic that every one turned around to look at her.

"Five hundred dollars," she repeated aloud. "Five hundred dollars in gold, he asks for the blood mackaw!" echoed through the market-place from mouth to mouth.

'Paquita stood so close to Carlos now he could feel her warm breath upon his neck. After a short consultation with his wife the man said, "Three hundred."

'Paquita looked toward Carlos, as though to say,

"Take it!" Close to Carlos, she quickly forgot all her calculations of the day previous.

'But Carlos merely shook his head. "I have said five hundred." And although he seemed indifferent as to whether or not they bought the bird, Paquita, who knew him better, actually felt the pumping of his heart. She saw his temples swell and she remarked the difficulty he had to keep his mouth from twitching.

' "I have said five hundred, five hundred, five hundred," he repeated, as if to hypnotize himself.

'The Americanos withdrew, made as if to leave definitely, murmuring, "Too much, too much!" All the venders at the market surrounded them by that time, and from every mouth it was heard: "He refuses three hundred gold pieces for the blood mackaw!" That certainly was a greater event than the catching of the bird. For all the business done on the market in a week hardly ever amounted to half that sum.

'Paquita was happy. To her, oh! that meant something. Even more than the possibility of marrying the boy. It meant that her influence had changed him. Had made him want money. Was making of him a good provider. For he dared all that he had dared for her!

'But the Americano woman was very much taken with the beauty of the mackaw. "Three hundred and fifty gold pieces," the man offered.

'Paquita's hand slipped into Carlos'. He did

not know whether to interpret this as an urge to accept or an urge to hold out for his price. But he shook his head and repeated again, like some magic formula, "I said five hundred." And as he repeated the sum again he squeezed the girl's hand until she cried out half in joy and half in pain.

"Four hundred," the Americano offered, looking into the pleading eyes of his wife.

"Four hundred dollars in gold," echoed through the market-place, "and he refuses!"

Roderiguez approached his brother's stand. He was pale beyond description. "Do you think that blood mackaws are caught twice a year?" he said to Paquita without looking at Carlos. Then followed a long discussion between the two Americanos. The woman seemed bent on possessing the mackaw. And so the man returned and said, "Well, then, be it as you say."

A loud cry from Paquita announced her triumph, for she knew it was distinctly her influence and his love for her that made him have the courage to insist upon such a price until he attained it. He was being made into a good trader and provider for her.

"Five hundred dollars for the blood mackaw!" was the cry throughout the market, and everybody stood in awe before the man willing to pay that for the bird that his woman desired and before the man who had attained such a price that he

might set up a house for the woman he loved. For it was no secret, the love of the two brothers for the girl, and her wavering between the two.

'The Americano counted out the five hundred dollars in gold into the hands of Carlos. "Just a second," Carlos excused himself. "I shall get a cage for the bird." Without asking the price, he took one of the largest cages from a cage dealer on a stand near by. Gently he placed the bird inside.

"And where will you take the bird?" Carlos asked the purchasers suddenly, as if awakening from a bad dream.

"To New York," the Americano answered.

"To New York!" Carlos repeated. "To New York? It is too cold for him there. It is dreadfully cold. Even here it is too cold for him. I can see it is too cold for him," he repeated, caressing the bird's feathers. Then suddenly he threw his head back, and, handing the money over to the buyers, he said, "I cannot sell him to you, because he will die there. Take your money back."

'Instantly there was commotion among the people. It seemed folly, sheer folly for a man to refuse such a fortune and to tell the weakest points of his sale to the buyer. But Carlos merely shook his head against the hundred advices shouted at him, the hundred derisions, the hundred mockeries.

'When Paquita realized what was happening, when the Americanos, after a few words between

themselves, were leaving the place, with a last parting regretful look at the red bird, she turned around in a mad fury and began to hammer with her fists upon Carlos' breast. "Fool! Fool! Fool!" she yelled, unable to find other words to express her rage to him.

"The bird will die there," was all Carlos said. "There is probably not another like him in the whole jungle. He will die there, he will die where it is cold."

"Fool! Fool! Fool!" shouted Paquita, hammering at his breast. And when she turned around Roderiguez was standing near by laughing, his eyes plainly saying, "I have always known it to be so."

'Carlos threw a silver piece to the man from whom he had taken the cage, and left the market-place with bowed head.

'And then Paquita thought fast and straight. And then she measured wealth as it should be measured. For the wealth that was in Carlos' soul was a larger source and more valuable than the silver that trickled into Roderiguez's hands.

'And the man who refused a fortune for a bird because it might die in an unfavourable climate, although to refuse meant the loss of the woman he loved, was wealthier, a thousand times wealthier, than the man who possessed a hundred thousand times that which he refused.

'There is an old hut not far from here. And in

the hut there is a bag of straw, and the man and woman living in that hut are frequently hungry and cold and wet. But all through the country ask any child, and they all know that hut under the name of "*Felicidad*." And all the roads leading to it are called "*Felicidad*." "Happiness."

Jancu Gian

AND of things as they are, I have this to say, that there is as little wisdom or understanding when praising the virtues of men as there is to punish them for their vices. And the hand we bless because it has cared for a garden until its thousand rose bushes are of the same size and colour is the cursed hand which has destroyed the ones that happened to be different from the others.

For men are called good when they are as the whole multitude is. But things as they are also perish together of the same disease. Then the unique, which when not destroyed is neglected, is the one which carries on life; life in a new form – but life nevertheless; procreating, reproducing itself; until by reason of numbers a new virtue is established out of the vice of yesterday. And what has been evil yesterday becomes good. And what has been neglected becomes beautiful. And what has been vicious, virtuous. For we know little of the sequence of things in life. And we know still less when our best deed will be the cause of the most heinous one. In the long chain of life evil will father the most beautiful thing – for flowers grow not on silk.

Now I will tell you the story of Jancu Gian – Jancu Gian, the '*Haiduc*,' the man who once spread terror the whole length of the Danube

and to the length of the Pruth River to where her arm locks the arm of the Danube to flow together into the Black Sea, going together to their doom as they meet. And the name of Jancu Gian was also revered and hated along the Carpathian mountains, those tall giants which of yore divided Walachia from the country of the Magyars – the tall and fierce Magyars, who have waited for centuries for the opportunity to invade the plains of Oltenia, the very first of the old Roman settlements in the Balkan peninsula. Oltenia, where the men are big and their light hair waves and hangs over their necks and their light blue eyes twinkle merrily, as if life were but a huge joke in which every one takes part. And as to the women of the Oltenia plains! Their brown arms are like the branches of trees, yet their ankles are as thin and as fleet as those of the deer. Their eyes are brown. Their hair, which they carry away from their foreheads under the wide *naframa*, the homespun head cover, is black and is tied in a knot at the neck by a red ribbon. I shall not sing their praises. But this I will tell: that the wives of men living in the other parts of Walachia live in continuous fear when their husbands are travelling that part of the country. For theirs is an old saying, 'When six men go to Oltenia, only one comes back; and that one because he was suddenly stricken blind.'

And of Jancu Gian's appearance I remember

this: He was a very old man and I a very young child when I saw him. His hair was snow white and his beard, which reached to his belt, only tinged with grey. And so old was he and his eyelids so heavy that he used to raise them with his finger when he wanted to look at some one. But he was as straight as a birch tree and his step was as springy as the step of a well-rested, well-nourished youth. When some one inquired about his health he replied by asking that a horseshoe be brought to him, a new one. This he would take in his two thickly-veined brown hands, and, bending the iron shoe back and forth, he would break it in twain. And of his voice, I know that he could make it as cooing and soft as that of a dove. But his voice changed when his anger rose with the memory of the past; when telling us of a time in his life; when the country, from the black hills of Bucovina down to the green fields of Orsova, was owned by the Turks and ruled by the Fanariots. Ah! those Fanariots; the descendants of the Greek renegades who had accepted Mohammedanism in Constantinople and who were given Roumania as a spoiling ground.

As Jancu Gian told us about the sufferings of his people in those days his voice grew louder and louder until it filled us with terror. Our pulses quickened and responded to the vibration of his voice. It was as though a thousand beaten drums had suddenly reached their strongest and their

quickest, and the beats of our blood were the very drumsticks which rapped on us.

Oh, for those breath-taking hours at the fireside, while the wind was moaning outside and the snow was falling so thick on the ground and in the air that we never knew whether the hours were the hours of the day or night.

And then suddenly Jancu Gian would quieten. He would lean heavily on the wall, his head bent low over his hairy chest, a few tears would roll down into his beard, winding between the folds of his old brown cheeks, and we would all begin to cry before sneaking off to our beds. Or we would go to lie down over the wide brick oven, to wait until the candle had flickered its last, the better to dream about the things we had heard. I vowed a thousand times to become a *Haiduc*, to organize bands of which the best should be the chiefs; to lurk in the forest with them, in the fastnesses of mountains, and descend from time to time on the palaces of the despoilers of the country, destroying them and leading the cruel tyrants into captivity, where we should compel them to swear off their ways, to return what they had stolen to the people, and leave the shores of the Danube never to come back again.

And now to the story of Jancu Gian.

When Jancu Gian was twenty he was as handsome a youth as ever lived in the country village where his father was the blacksmith. He worked

the whole week with his father, with hammer at anvil, and danced on Sunday from early morning to late at night, as did the other youths and maidens of the village, to the music the Gipsies were making seated upon a table on the greensward in front of the inn.

And so sure was the father that his son would continue the trade that the handles he made to his heavy sledgehammers were of the stoutest and oldest hickory, for, said he, these handles were to last not only his life long but also during the life of his son.

And the peasants were all proud of Jancu. His work was lasting and honest; it was done cheerfully. For there is an old proverb: When the nails in the horseshoes are driven in with laughter they will last much longer than when driven in with curses. And the horse shod by a laughing blacksmith will never slip and will live much longer than the one shod by a cheerless blacksmith.

Among the maidens of the village Jancu liked best Perita, the daughter of the priest. She knew better the angle in which to stick the red rose in her hair, and how to encircle herself with the narrow belt that held the blue front half into the gold tinselled green back half of her skirt together. Her white-embroidered, large-sleeved, open-necked blouse was always more beautiful than any worn by the other girls of the village. And her teeth were like milk of corn, and her skin as

fragrant and of the amber colour of the first honey. And the smiling words she had! And her eyes always twinkled and her moist lips were always parted when she danced.

The whole village knew that Jancu and Perita were to be married soon. The handsomest young man had chosen the handsomest of the girls as the future mother of his children. Neither poverty nor riches divided the people of that village. Each one worked six days a week, to rest and dance on the seventh one. Jancu having no rivals, Christmas was set as the time by the parents for the wedding of their children.

One Sunday before the first snowfall, while the young peasants with their girl friends were dancing and singing outside the inn, turning round and round the table on which the gipsy musicians were sitting, scraping at their fiddles, and while the older men were tasting the barrels of new wine that had just arrived for the inn, smacking knowing tongue against roof of mouth before uttering opinion of quality to the attending potbellied innkeeper; while this was going on a carriage, in which two men and a woman were sitting, a carriage drawn by four horses in silver-studded harness, bells tinkling over their necks, was seen coming.

Instantly the gipsies stopped playing and clambered down from the table. The dancing ceased, and the peasants spilled the contents of glasses to

get their hands free so as to uncover their heads. The innkeeper bent to the ground, cringing like a dog, crawled almost on his fours to the carriage.

It had been murmured about the village for some time, and the news came from the priest, who was the only one in the village to receive news from the state or government, that a new prefect was coming to administer that part of the country. But the peasants along the Moldava River had never paid much heed to such changes. A new prefect or an old prefect never caused much difference. Their own quarrels were settled by the priest and their primar, the mayor, who also collected their taxes. Seldom, if ever, had a prefect visited their village, but when that stately carriage approached the inn they were all certain that it was the prefect. And so haughty and cruel did he look, so disdainful of their presence, that the old proud spirit was humbled in many of them. They stood with their fur caps in hand looking at the people in the carriage and being overlooked by the prefect and the other two as if they were cattle pasturing at some distance.

Suddenly the prefect, the young hunchback with vast black moustache and cruel eyes, rose in his seat and began to gesticulate like a wild man. The primar, the mayor, had by that time arrived from his home and was humbly and officiously bowing to his superior. The old head of the village could not understand a word of what the hunch-

back said, for he spoke Greek, which the peasant did not understand.

Then, in greater rage, the prefect pointed toward Jancu Gian, who was standing at a distance with an arm around the waist of his beloved and the tall fur cap tilted insolently and proudly on his forehead. It was not that Jancu Gian had deliberately intended to offend the prefect — he had never been insolent to anyone — but neither had he ever humbled himself to another man, for he was proud with the pride of his youth and strength. He had only forgotten to bare his head. Perhaps because his right hand happened to be in the clasp of the left one of his beloved!

After the hunchback had raged for a few moments Jancu understood the reason, but he was too proud to do as he was expected. The man sitting near the prefect then explained in Wallachian to the mayor and asked that the boy be called to the carriage.

Jancu, still with fur cap on, with his arms folded across his breast, approached slowly when he was beckoned to do so. The boy had hardly come near enough when the cane of the prefect came smashing down over his face.

An hour later the carriage, driven by a pale and frantic woman, returned to the prefecture. The two men were dead on their seats.

Jancu Gian had taken refuge in the forest, never

again to dance as a free man at the inn. Never again to sing his song when driving the iron nails through the shoes on the horses' hoofs.

But this was only the beginning, for the mild, soft-spoken boy soon became the terror of the oppressors of his country. No sooner had a wrong been done by the hirelings of the oppressors than Jancu Gian, around whom a group of youths from his own village had assembled, was already avenging it. Whole herds of cattle owned by the oppressors were driven away and disappeared; houses went up in flames like so many match sticks. Those who had sinned against the people paid for it with their lives.

The government set a price on Jancu Gian's head. But there was not one peasant mean enough, black-hearted enough, even to desire such gold. A year later there were a hundred Jancu Gians with organized bands lurking in the forests and mountains or gliding rafts on the rivers. Being the prefect of a district was no longer an appanage given to a faithful servant. It came to be considered a punishment. Exiled Greek boyars, living on lands which they had despoiled, trembled every night lest Jancu Gian, the *Haiduc*, should appear from nowhere, across the mountains, across rivers, suddenly, to avenge some wrong that one of the hirelings had done.

The peasants, who at first were themselves afraid of the bandits, learned in time who were their

friends. And, though occasionally they were asked to separate themselves from a few lambs or a calf to furnish meat for the men in the forests, stories began to circulate about good deeds done by Jancu Gian and his band. Poor widows were succoured; healthy, strong youths dressed like peasants appeared on moonlit nights, just in time, to drive the oxen of the widow's plough, or came with scythes to cut the grain or to thrash it, without exacting any pay for their labours.

The gipsies and story-tellers began to sing songs of praise – at times veiled and at times bold and frank, about Jancu Gian and his *Haiducs*, who gave to the poor what they took from the rich. And many a time after a battle had occurred between the *Haiducs* and the gendarmes, and when groups of *Haiducs* and gendarmes were lying in pools of blood in front of the church, the priest's first prayer for the dead was uttered for the ones in fur caps and red sashes and not for the ones in brass-buttoned uniforms and long swords. Other youths, the country over, fired by the example of Jancu Gian, formed avenging hordes. And, so as to spread terror the better, each chief called himself 'Jancu Gian.'

And now I will tell you what happened to Perita: After Jancu had flown into the forest, her father, the priest who carried his vestments by grace of the government and in whose pay he was, turned his face away from the youth. Jancu had speech

with the man of God several times, watching for an opportunity at cross roads, but never again was it given him to lay his eyes on the beautiful Perita. The peasants of the village expected the *Haiduc* to come and take her by force or violence, but Jancu respected the priest, although his conduct embittered his life. And another thing: that same priest had said the blessing at the wedding of his own father and mother, and he could not think of laying hands on him or doing him violence. And, though Jancu suffered greatly, crying in the lap of his mother when he came to see her at unexpected hours of the night, he still looked upon the priest as the man of God. And the bitterer he became against the Fanariots, for it was because of them that he was separated from the woman of his choice.

And Perita, who had always been so gay, whose speech was always the music of laughter, who had danced more than she had walked! Perita's eyes lost their twinkle and her knees sagged; her honeyed skin lost its fragrance and her lips parched as dry as the skin of an apple forgotten by the pickers but whose stem was too strong to let it fall and rot.

After the first year passed other youths of the village, urged on by the priest himself and by their own memories of Perita's loveliness, offered to marry her, for it became known to all that the priest would never permit his daughter to marry

a *Haiduc* upon whose head a price was laid. At times Perita, whose youth cried for life, would come out to the inn and dance with some young man, but his hands upon her bare arms made her feel as if ice had touched her and her step would be so heavy and so unrhythmical that she would break away and cry in shame.

In time she became known as Jancu Gian's fiancée. Her misfortune and her sadness became one of the things of the village of which everybody was aware and of which nobody spoke. People merely shook their heads when they saw her sitting in front of her father's house; they did not wonder. And when they saw her looking aimlessly at the passers-by their hearts saddened. The priest and his wife accepted what had happened as done by the hand of God.

At first Jancu Gian suffered very much because of his separation from Perita, but in time he began to reason that it was perhaps for the best. What would he have done if he had taken her with him into the forest? Compelled to hack his way through from one surrounded forest to another; digging his way out from caves in which he had taken refuge; on horseback at night to reach the place where he had to avenge some wrong. What would he have done if he had had a wife to take care of?

Occasionally, arriving on Sunday in a village, he and his men would snatch a dance at an inn before

they were recognized. At times they danced on even after they were recognized. His reputation frequently only spurred the maidens to vie with each other as to who should dance longer with him. There were many buxom girls ready to follow him wherever he desired, and many a time Jancu Gian himself had almost been caught in the noose of his passion, his vigour, his youth, but the memory of that Sunday morning when he stood with arm around Perita, fur cap on his head, first facing that hunchback and his hireling he had killed, would bring prudence to his mind, and Jancu Gian would depart before things had gone too far. Though he always remembered a certain promise he had made to Perita, it was said of him by those who knew that his lips savoured of the kisses he had received from the girls of a hundred villages.

Among the Greek oppressors of the peasants there was none so harsh and so hated as a man by the name of Stavidis. Jancu Gian finally decided to avenge the wrongs done by that man. Stavidis, who lived in a castle he had built close to the shore of the Danube, surrounded by a high brick wall and guarded inside and outside by picked men and fierce dogs, knew what was coming. He organized posses of men and dogs who combed the forests as do hunters in search of game, and many a time a pitched battle ensued

in which men of either side paid with their lives for their audacity.

In time the enmity between Stavidis and Jancu Gian lost its national character and became a very personal affair between the two men. So one night Jancu Gian, alone on his horse, after bidding his friends to wait for him patiently in the forest until he called them by a given signal, took the road that led to the palace of the Greek. It was not the first time that Jancu Gian had thus departed on a single-handed expedition. Every time he had done so his men had remained singing quietly around the fire, to make the vigil easier, fretting impatiently until their chief should call them. For they were impetuous youths, eager not only to avenge the wrongs their people suffered but also to show personal valour. And many a one hoped to make his own name as well feared as Jancu Gian's.

But that night, after Jancu had left, the youngest of them did not dare raise his voice in chant. The twenty or more men sat silently around the fire of wet wood which refused to burn brightly and smoked without giving either warmth or light. An hour after their chief had gone, and following his order, they went each to a different point, surrounding the castle in a wide circle, from where they communicated with one another by imitating the howls and cries of forest animals. They were to wait, each at his own post, until they should

hear Jancu's own signal, a peculiar call Jancu had invented for himself, which imitated no beast and did not seem possible to be voiced by a human being.

The whole night his men waited for the signal of their chief, and while waiting they kept calling to one another, until it seemed that the whole countryside had been invaded by more wolves and other denizens of the wilds than existed in the whole wide world.

In the morning, unable to resist, the *Haiducs* approached from different sides, verging toward the castle of the Greek. At high sun time they found Jancu, with a bullet in his chest, lying by the roadside. Near him sat a young, dark-eyed, dark-haired, olive-skinned girl, whom they recognized to be Stavidis' only daughter, trying to stanch the blood and keep down the fever of the man with water which she brought in her cupped palms from a rivulet flowing near by.

Xanta looked up appealingly to the men when she saw the wounded man thrown on to a horse.

'Where are you taking him?' she cried, wringing her hands.

'To die among friends,' answered the older of the *Haiducs* as the horse was already on the way.

A month later, when Jancu Gian had miraculously recovered from his wound, he told his men how he had made his way into the very room

occupied by the Greek. But it so happened that Stavidis was not at home that night. After going through several rooms, garroting and gagging the servants, he came upon the room occupied by the girl, who alone of her family was at home. By that time one of the servants, having freed himself, freed the others, and they rushed Jancu while he was in the room of the girl wondering whether he should take her as hostage or not. His waiting horse fled, scared at the sound of so many shots without the master being in the saddle. The servants, twenty in number, headed by the girl, were constantly upon him. At last, just as he had thought he had eluded them – But he remembered nothing of what happened afterwards except a stinging pain, a numbing of the knees, and the uselessness of his arms.

When he opened his eyes again Xanta was near him bathing his wound. There were no servants around her; either she had sent them away or they were not aware that their mistress was attending the wounded *Haiduc*.

All during his convalescence Jancu thought of the girl, and the more he thought of her the more he considered himself unworthy of his calling. She was the daughter of the most hated of the Greeks and he was Jancu Gian, whom all his people expected to hate and despise and destroy all Fanariots. Only a traitor could think such thoughts of the daughter of the enemy of the peo-

ple. And Perita! Was he forgetting Perita who waited for him!

Still, when he was well enough to go about alone, Jancu, disguising himself thoroughly, arranged to get within the enclosure of the Stavidis home, to catch a glimpse of the girl. He saw her, unbeknown to her, from a distance several times. And once, when he had come too near, though he was disguised as a pedlar of penny books, she raised her head and looked into his eyes at the sound of his voice. The next moment she had pulled off his false beard.

'Why hast thou come here?' she asked him. 'Is it to murder my father?'

'To see you,' Jancu replied, 'to hear your voice!'

They remained standing, looking at each other. Then Xanta, fearing that Jancu should be recognized by the servants, now that she had torn off his disguise, guided him herself out of the gate.

The *Haiducs* wondered why Jancu suddenly resisted several tempting occasions when he could have raided and destroyed the Stavidis castle and all its people. Several times complete plans and suggestions of how to accomplish that were brought to him by one or another of his men, but every time Jancu postponed the fray. Angered, several men left Jancu to form a band of their own to destroy the Stavidis home and kill every soul in it.

He again sought to see Xanta. It was with the intention to warn her. But he learned that she had been sent away to some other boyar's house, exactly which one nobody knew. From then on every time a raid was planned by the *Haiducs* on some Greek boyar Jancu Gian was the one who interfered, for there was no possible way of knowing whether Xanta, the daughter of the Greek, was not in the place they intended to raid and destroy.

Angered and dispirited because of the inactivity, more *Haiducs* of Jancu Gian left him and joined other chieftains carrying on the avenging work.

His sudden inactivity was only known to the *Haiducs*. His name continued to strike terror to the hearts of the enemies of his people. Jancu, almost alone, took to wandering; going from one village to the other, disguised as a pedlar or an itinerant story-teller.

And lo! one day as Jancu was drinking a small pitcher of wine in one of the inns he frequented, gendarmes overpowered him. Before he had time to move a finger he was bound and thrown to the ground. One of his own men had betrayed him for thirty silver pieces.

His capture caused a sensation, yet so great in numbers were the ones who now openly spoke out their admiration for the man that the authorities, headed as they were by Greeks, dared not make

short work of the man. His trial was purposely held in a small village.

The roads leading to that village crowded with people who had come across mountains and rivers to be there and see with their own eyes the man who had in such a short time put fear into the hearts of the men who had oppressed them. Fathers carried young sons on their shoulders in the hope that their offspring would, by catching a glimpse of the *Haiduc*, grow themselves to be true Roumanians. Mothers carried their tiny babies, hoping that by some miracle Jancu Gian's eyes might rest on them.

Yet even while the trial was going on, with thousands of people waiting outside the little red brick courthouse, the scaffold was being erected and the hangman, surrounded by half an army, was adjusting the trap and trying out the noose.

Only two hours after he had been brought before the judges, bound in ropes and chains, so that he could not move or stand, Jancu Gian was carried to the gallows at the bottom of a manure van, dragged by a lame donkey, between two deep rows of soldiers.

Awed by the spectacle, though deeply angered, thousands of peasants surrounded the scaffold, after ten or more rows of soldiers had encircled it.

The hangman, who according to custom wore a hideous black mask on his face and was dressed

in a blood-red garment that covered him from head to foot, bowed to the people in mockery. In giving the last touches to the noose and to the trap he farcically attracted the attention of the people by his vile gestures.

Jancu, who had by that time managed to turn round to have a last look at the upturned faces of people he loved so well, saw Perita standing near her father. At the other end stood Xanta. He could see she was alone and that her hair was dishevelled. It was plain to him she had come a long distance.

When the hangman had almost finished his antics an old priest, his face framed by a long, white beard that reached almost to his belt, made his way to the scaffold near the *Haiduc*. Lifting the crucifix in one hand, he raised his other hand and motioned to the people that he wanted to be heard.

'Hear ye!' he called out. 'There is an old custom among our people in this, our country. If any woman who hears me is willing to marry this man and have the hangman act as priest, and a tent in the cemetery be the place of their wedding, this man's life will be given to her. But, lest there should be too much haste, I must explain that the hangman blesses their wedding – not in the name of God, but in the name of the evil one – the children born of such a wedding, and the children of the children for seven generations, shall never be

allowed in church; and, wherever they are, they shall wear a red band on which a black skull is painted and a rope on their necks so as to be known by everybody. And the woman and the man shall for ever wear a rope noose on their necks and a red, cone-shaped cap on their heads; and every month they shall be visited by the hangman, who will break bread with them and drink water from the same pitcher and also be godfather to the children.'

This, and many other gruesome descriptions, were made by the priest.

Jancu looked at Perita. At first there were many other girls in the crowd ready to make the great sacrifice and save him from the hangman's noose. But as the priest described in great detail the ceremonies the girls covered their faces and disappeared from the crowd.

Perita was the one to hold out the longest. She seemed impatient to hear the end of the priest's description. But as it continued her head bent lower and lower, so that when the priest finally called out whether there was a woman who wanted to marry the condemned man, Perita's face was in her hands.

But a loud cry from the other end burst from the crowd. It was Xanta's voice, answering to the question of the priest with a loud: '*Ego!*'

And so great was the joy of the people that their Jancu had been saved that not one-tenth of the

ceremonies described by the priest were carried out.

‘Why this pistol in your hand?’ asked Jancu when he had remained alone with his wife.

‘It was prepared to shoot you with before the hangman’s noose should encircle your neck.’

And because an ‘enemy’s’ daughter had saved their chief the *Haiducs* ceased their raids against the Greeks’ boyars; for the peasants began to see that even serpents are not all poisonous.

Mothers

IN the little village of Cateni, at the angle where the river Prut unites itself with the Danube, there was no prouder family than the Catenis. The village was named to eternalize the founder, Jancu Cateni, who had abandoned land and wealth and cattle in Bessarabia when that province was torn away years ago by the Russians from Roumania.

Each inhabitant of the village was related to the others. Within the church painted blue and yellow those who belonged to the male Catenis sat in the front rows, wearing coats furred with black lambskins. The direct female descendants girded themselves with a wide red sash over their green dresses and white homespun shirts. The others were girded with sashes of different colours.

And proud and hard workers they were, all the Catenis. Spreading, building, clearing ground, raising churches, multiplying sheep, cattle, horses – working, working, living. Strong men and broad-hipped women. Tall, wide, blonde, with slow gait and loud voice. Masters, each one of them. Their stallions were of the best blood. Their cows gave the best milk. Their rams raised the longest wool. Their own best seed for the corn and the wheat. Their hives swarmed by the finest queens. Cateni honey had a quality

and a flavour all its own. When a chair was made, or a table, or a cradle, it was made to last for ever. The spinning-wheels and the spindles were of the finest grained oak. The looms were of the cleanest pine. And the waggon-wheels were built to outlast life itself. When a Cateni farm waggon passed through the street of the village, there was no clatter, no rumbling, no squeaking. Only the horses' hoof-beats were heard and the singing of the driver.

And of shepherd dogs they had the best. Early in the spring when a she-dog would bring down her litter the master of the house would make selection of the most favoured pups. The rest would be drowned. For they needed strong dogs to watch the sheep and protect them from the numerous packs of wolves and the thieving Tartars roaming in the neighbouring forests.

It is the story of one of these dogs that I am about to tell.

Azor loved her master. She was the only one of the litter allowed to live. The master, a young boy of twenty, to whom she was given in charge by his father, bedded her close to his own cot, so as to be able to take care of her during the long cold nights of the last days of winter. Day after day he had fed her tepid milk with a spoon until she learned how to lap it from the wooden saucer on the floor. And later, when the snow had

melted, he made of her his steady companion. Dan Cateni, strong and too serious, had few companions in the village. Even at the dances he was all too sober – sullen, snobbish, the others thought. A dog was just the kind of companion he loved, a servant and a friend in one.

He took her with him to the smithy to watch the sharpening of the ploughshares and the tightening of the wheels; and, protecting her from the scraggy, quarrelsome gipsy dogs, he taught her to come running when called by her name or whistled to. When the grass was high enough for the sheep to graze, he took her with him to the grazing-field and taught her all the tricks of the trade, and covered her with his own coat when the nights were too cold. An older dog watched while she and her master slept head to head in the dug-out. And when she had learned all about watching sheep and they returned the flock to the village before the snow had fallen, there were other things to learn: to hunt for rabbits and to distinguish the step of a friend from that of a stranger, to give alarm when the scent of wolves betrayed their approach, and not to accept food from any one but the master. A dog that accepted food from other hands was not to be trusted. And above all to watch against all Tartars and gipsies.

The second winter of Azor's life Dan, the young master, was married to Puica, a lovely

blonde, long-haired girl with blue eyes and a deep, pleasant voice. The wedding united two branches of the family that had not been on the best of terms. It was therefore celebrated as no wedding had been in many years. Azor was terribly alarmed at the sight of so many gipsies, who came to fiddle at the wedding; at so many groups of strangers, people from surrounding villages, arriving in sleighs, *troikas*, with three horses in single file, with bells dangling from their beribboned necks. The dog got hoarse barking at them: strangers and gipsies, and yet she was told to keep away from them, to let them go and come as they pleased!

The following day the large kennel in which the dog slept was moved over from the house of Dan's father and placed near the new house that had been built for the young couple. And the sheep, those that belonged to Dan and those of Puica's dowry, were driven over to a new shed. And the cows and oxen and horses were stabled in the new barn. Azor was bewildered by all this unexpected change, by the sudden activity, and the master had little time to talk to her, to reassure her of what was going on; that it was as he wanted, that it was solely of his doing.

A few days later it dawned on Azor that the new house was her master's new home. Her kennel was there to stay, and she had to watch over all — over the new house, even over the strange sheep

and cattle that now filled the corrals and the sheds, and bleated continuously, the strange rams horning one another, the ewes goading, boring, until supremacy should be settled. A few more days and Azor learned that her master's wife was also her master, and that she had to watch over her.

The dog followed her master into the shed several times to help separate the rams trying to kill one another. Dan's wife joined them, proud if one of her animals showed up stronger, more spirited than the ones of her husband. For she was a Cateni, too. The blood of her cattle was as good as that of her husband's, even as her own was as good and as untainted as his.

Spring was on them before the two flocks had fraternized and merged. When grazing-time had crept in, the young master got another dog from Puica's father and set out with the two separate flocks, each with its own belled ram at the head of the convoy, to the hills. The young wife accompanied her husband a short distance, then she returned to the home to await his coming in the autumn.

Negru, the other dog, was two years older than Azor, well trained and of even disposition. Azor and Negru got on well together. And because of that the two flocks mingled better soon after they had reached the hills, and were respected

by the guiding-rams when the sheep had to be herded close together. Before the summer was far advanced the two flocks were one, guarded by the two dogs belonging to one master. It was as it should be. When the master's wife Puica rode into the hills to see her husband, both dogs welcomed her, yelping, barking, crouching servilely at her feet.

'Did Negru give you any trouble?' Puica asked her husband after she had embraced him.

'None at all. The best-trained dog I have ever seen,' he answered. 'He has completed the education of Azor. We shall have fine pups from them this coming spring.'

She remained with her husband a few days. The last night of her stay she had occasion to be proud of Negru. The shepherds and the dogs of the neighbouring hills raised the cry of wolf. Azor and Negru gathered the fold into one compact mass of frightened white fleece that shook and trembled under the deep blue of the sky. Then, leaving Azor to keep the mass compact, the other dog followed his master and the other shepherds into the forest. Before the hour was over the wolf was dead. Negru had cornered him and held him until Dan was near enough to make his aim sure.

'A brave dog, Negru,' said Dan as he kissed his wife and showed her the dead beast.

'And look at Azor! One would never say five

hundred sheep were breathing there. It's like a mound of white clouds frozen to the ground. Not a leg moves,' pointed Puica at the flock.

And the other shepherds who came to look at the dead wolf congratulated the young couple. It was a thick wolf, fur worth at least ten sheep. A good pelt for the winter.

Small wonder!

Cateni dogs. Cateni sheep. A Cateni master And Cateni luck. Such a combination was unsurpassable.

Azor liked Negru even better after that night. Negru, too, was pleased with his partner's work. The master and his wife were pleased with both of them. And they had plenty of fresh meat after the wolf was skinned.

At the bend of the road that circled spiralwise upward, Puica, riding alone homeward, was met by Sender, Khali Alfa's son. Khali Alfa was a Tartar chief living in the valley, with whom the Catenis had made peace. Years before a Cateni had been of great service to the Tartar chief and that deed was remembered by the whole tribe. Sender, Khali Alfa's son, had frequently come to the dances at the inn, and though he neither danced nor drank, being a good Mussulman, he would sit and watch the gladsome girls and boys skip and turn.

It was whispered about that he had his eye on

one of the girls; but the narrow slits over his deep, sunken, bead-like black eyes covered his intention so well no one could find out what his desires were. While the dancers turned and the gipsies played, Sender would sit and watch, and carve with his dagger moons and stars on the handles of his pistols.

And then, suddenly, after Puica's wedding, Sender ceased his weekly visits to the inn. Then the village knew. The girls told Puica about it. She laughed. She was inwardly pleased. Sender, Khali Alfa's son, had come for her, for her only, though he had never spoken a word to her. It was no mean thing to attract the attention of such a man. And as she pictured him to herself, when she no longer saw him, he appeared like a giant, like a hero of legends. Big, broad, in coloured clothes, with a belt heavy with weapons; the fiery horse in a copper-studded saddle waiting at the door of the inn. And he had come only for her. Of course she loved Dan Cateni! Yet she was flattered considerably by the other's attention.

And suddenly Sender appeared at the bend of the road.

'Salaam, duduie,' he greeted her as he brought his horse near hers.

'Salaam, effendi,' she answered coquettishly. 'It's long since I have seen you.'

After a long pause he seized her wrist in which

she held the reins, thus forcing her to look at him.

'If it has been as long for you as it has been for me, Puica – then –'

She freed her wrist with one jerk. She realized that her words had been seized upon by the passionate man.

'It's not what I meant, effendi. I meant I had not been at the dance since I am married.'

They rode on silently on the narrow, upward-winding road. The flanks of the horses touched and their breath mingled. The overhanging boughs from both sides of the road turned and hung so low the riders had to bend their heads to pass through.

At the top of the mountain Sender said: 'I love you. I have always loved you!'

'I am a married woman, son of Khali Alfa,' Puica answered.

'That is easy. You will be a widow in a few hours, and then I come to take you.'

The calmness with which Sender spoke made Puica shiver. Her heart stopped beating. Her head began to swim. Instinctively the horse stopped in his tracks. Below, from the valley, came the faint sound of the bleating of the lambs and the melancholic strain from Dan's reed pipe, and above this the furious barking of Azor.

Puica came to rapidly. 'If you love me, you won't do such a thing. I love Dan, my husband.'

A loud yell, as if Sender had suddenly been bitten by a snake, was the answer. The Tartar sunk his spurs into his horse. 'I shall keep faith with your people as long as my father lives, but when he is gone —' A moment later he was galloping down the hill, bending low over the neck of the horse.

The Tartar had hardly disappeared from view when Puica heard a clatter of horse coming from below — clatter of horse and the barking of Azor. As the crow flies, the distance Puica was away from the flock was a very short one. Only as the road led windingly upward had the ride been long.

'Puica! Puica! Puica!' called Dan's voice.

She answered, whistling loudly through her fingers. It was their signal. A short while later Dan had rejoined her.

'It's because of Azor. She barked and called and acted so irrationally I had to follow her. Had anything happened?'

Azor was circling around and around. 'Nothing!' Puica answered.

When Dan wanted to leave, Azor refused to follow him.

'What is the matter with her?' Dan wondered. Then as an afterthought he added: 'I suppose it would be just as well to let her follow you.'

But when he veered his horse and made a few

paces in the opposite direction Azor began to bite the legs of the horse and jump as high as the saddle, calling, barking, crying. 'She wants us both,' Dan laughed, and departed at top speed.

Azor rushed from her master to the wife, undecided what to do, rolling on the ground; biting the dust, half-mad, not to be understood.

Puica understood, only she knew it was best not to let Dan know what had happened. When she continued her descent of the mountain, Azor, after hesitating a few seconds, ran ahead of her — sniffing the air, grunting, halting cautiously here and there, never allowing the rider to pass her.

Hours later, when they had reached the village, the dog was so thoroughly exhausted that she lay down and panted, her eyes as glassy as if she were mad. Puica watched over Azor the rest of the evening and at night she bedded her at the foot of her own sleeping-couch. There was a great secret and a bond between the woman and the dog.

That summer passed without any other occurrence of importance. Sender kept away from the village. No one ever saw him. Before the frost had bitten the grass, the flock, herded together, returned home again, and Negru and Azor were housed in the same kennel. Azor had slept at

Puica's bed-foot till then. 'This is a watch-dog, not a lap-dog,' argued Dan. 'You have spoiled her, Puica.'

The whole day long both dogs ran and hunted in the forest. But before the snow had fallen Azor felt heavy on her feet. Rabbits passed by her nose and she could not catch them. She wanted to follow Negru in his expeditions. He was roaming over the homestead and the fields, with his nose to the ground; filling himself with fresh kills of hares and ground-hogs. But she could not. She tired too soon. She tired following even her master. She began to dislike most of the food that was given her and searched for roots of horse-radish and wild garlic. At night when Negru would jump to his feet at the slightest noise she would merely hide her head under the fresh straw, unwilling to notice anything, unwilling to move even when continual thirst burned her throat.

Early one morning, while it was yet dark, there was much noise and commotion in the master's house. Old women wrapped in their furs appeared from nowhere. Negru barking so loudly, Azor dragged herself out of the kennel to see what was happening. She saw her master. Everybody talked and laughed and shook hands with him. He was silent. She crept up to him. She whined and tried to make him understand that she was in pain. But he had no ears for her, no eyes for

her. He listened to what was going on within the house. Of a sudden there was a piercing cry, then low moans and a strange little whelping. Women went out to call the master in, and they hugged and kissed him as they half carried, half dragged him in to see his wife and the newborn male child. Another Cateni had come into the world.

Azor dragged herself back to the kennel. A tearing pain pulled her down and choked and stabbed her in a thousand places at the same time. She whined and cried her loudest. Negru put in his head, sniffed and disappeared. The master came and sat down by her. The dog looked up and wondered whether he understood—but was certain that *she* would have understood.

When the sun had risen again over the mountains, two tiny little balls of humid, reddish fur were tugging and pulling at Azor's breasts. She was fast asleep.

In the days that followed, the previous vigour flowed back into Azor's veins. It was so pleasant to feel the little things near her—the little tiny things that had eased her great pain and had relieved her. She was weak yet, but light on her feet again. The master came often, bringing soft warm food and plenty of milk, and she was happy when he knelt down near her and looked

at the puppies. But why was *she* not coming, Why was *she* not seen?

A few days later he came and took her and the pups into the house. His wife had asked to see them. She insisted they had to show Azor the little baby. At the sight of her mistress the dog became happy again. She looked long at the baby that was shown her, listened to its little whine and watched how it was laid near the mistress's breast. The dog raised her head at the sound made by the feeding lips of the child. The child was a friend. It had to be watched over. And its lips made the same sound as that made by her own pups.

Dan looked at Azor.

'I can swear, Puica, she understands it's your child,' he called out. And bending over he patted the dog on the head. She whined softly and licked his hand.

'Of course she understands. She understands and knows more than you do.' She was almost at the point of telling of the meeting with Sender, that he should be prepared. Khali Alfa was an old man. There was no telling what morning his son would become chief. But she was afraid. She knew Dan too well. He would have carried the battle to the enemy's camp immediately. His wife had been insulted. That secret had already eaten her heart out. She no longer laughed. Her lips were always humid and red,

A week after the pups were born Dan came to the kennel and, looking at them carefully, he decided they were both worthless. There was no use keeping them. Full of confidence, the dog allowed the master to leave her presence with the pups in his hands. She waited for him to return with them, waited an hour, waited two. He did not come. Then she crawled to the door of the house and yelped and called and scratched. He opened the door and let her in. She looked at his hands and smelled them. She raised her head and barked at him. He looked at her sternly. What did she want? Oh! About the pups!

It made him very angry. He opened the door and ordered her out. But Azor ran to the mistress and stretched her neck appealingly. She would understand.

Puica's eyes were moist. 'Poor mother! Poor mother! Poor Azor, how she suffers!'

It made Dan still angrier. 'Pups of a first litter are seldom worth anything. You don't expect me to keep worthless dogs on this place, do you?'

It was the Cateni tradition. Only the best, only the strongest.

'No, Dan. Yet had I known -'

'I am the master,' was his hard answer. 'Women should leave dogs alone.'

For days and days Azor walked around yelping,

whining, crying. She watched the door and followed her master from a distance. But he never led her to her pups. A week later the sheds were opened to accustom the young lambs to the spring air. It had been a good season. Ewe after ewe had come down with lamb. At the sound of their sucking hisses Azor was reminded of her pups. She barked and whined and cried. And when the master happened to be in the shed she called him and tugged at his coat, asking him to lead her to where were the hungry lips of her pups.

Sometimes her misery would move him to pity. At other times he would chase her from him angrily. Spring was on. One could not waste time when there were three hundred young bleating lambs to be attended and shearing to be done. For they sheared their lambs in the spring, the Catenis, when their wool was long and soft. One became a real gospodar only when he could shear a certain amount of wool of a spring. The day was approaching when he, as the new gospodar, would march ahead of a procession of his own kin, each with a wax candle in his hand, and he holding the largest, to be deposited at the feet of the icon at the cross-roads — an old custom of the village when a young husband had shorn for the first time three thousand pounds of wool from his own lambs. He was thinking of that day when the yelping dog tugged at him.

He kicked the dog, just as Puica entered the shed.

'Oh, how could you!' she cried, gathering the dog in the folds of her skirt.

He looked furiously at her. 'That dog will never be any good. And 'twill be your fault.'

And from then on Dan paid little attention to Azor. The wife had spoiled a good watch-dog. So when the ice on the river broke and the sheep were herded out, gathered, and the belled rams stood at the head of the fold, the master took only Negru with him to the mountains. Azor was left with his mistress.

Standing outside the church the priest and his choir of maidens blessed the flock.

'Oh, for all that the soil contains! Look at all the colours of the field. The millions of daisies, the stars of the earth, waving in the blue green of the grass; as if the summer skies had gently lowered themselves to the ground. The field pansies, violets, the intoxicating mint clinging to the thicker stalks of the goldenrod, the multi-coloured corn-flower, yellow with carnadined open lips and blue fringes, or white with closed green hearts. Look at the bell-shaped morning-glories rising above the copper-coloured clover flowers. All the colours. All the flowers. The soil, the soil. Food. Shelter. Wool. Silk. Milk. Life. Every handful of earth the dust of our forefathers and the flesh of our grandchildren and

great-grandchildren until extinction. God gave us the soil. It is His heart. From it comes all we need. To it we give all we have, even unto ourselves.'

It was an old prayer, harking back to the pagan days of the country. The sheep were blessed yearly before they left for the grazing-grounds.

The following morning, after Dan had left the village, Sender appeared in Cateni. Azor had slept at the foot of Puica's bed. Early in the morning when the door was opened the young Tartar was there. Azor began to bark furiously. Puica came out and seeing the man humble and broken, she bade him politely good morning. She did not hear what he answered, for the dog's loud barking drowned his voice. The noise attracted the attention of the neighbours. The women withdrew their heads with a smile. So! That was it! Sender was paying visits! But the men, although remaining at a distance, kept their blunderbusses handy. One could never tell with a Tartar. It was always well to have one hand armed, while shaking the hand of an infidel.

No matter how many times Puica ordered Azor to lie still she refused. Finally she ran at top speed in the direction of the mountains.

'You had better leave, Sender,' begged Puica. 'That dog is going to call the master.'

'Is that all you have to tell me?' questioned the Tartar. 'I thought you might have considered. It is better for your people that you come away with me before I am the chief. My men just wait for that day.' Then, changing from a threatening tone to a supplicating one, he begged: 'Puica! Puica! Come with me!'

At that moment several men appeared.

'He has come to inquire whether Dan would not sell him some of our corn. He is short of feed,' Puica explained. 'I cannot sell him any. If any of you can, it would be well.'

Sender's eye twinkled with pleasure. She lied for his sake. 'Have you any corn for sale?' he addressed one man. 'No? Too bad. Have you? No? Well - I must ride on elsewhere. Salaam, friends.' And he was off.

Azor had evidently reconsidered, for she returned presently near her mistress. That night she refused to sleep indoors. She lay down near the door and barked furiously at the slightest noise. At dawn Puica was awakened by the report of a gun. When she had rushed out to see what had happened, Azor was crumpled in a heap, covered with blood. She was only wounded, however - a big gash in the breast where the bullet had gone through.

'Who could have done that?' people wondered. 'Who could have done it?' Puica knew. The dog knew.

Because the dog was ill two women came to sleep in Puica's room. In the morning Puica's first thought was of Azor. For a long time she pressed the dog's face near hers and said: 'What shall we do? What shall we do?'

It was a long and uneventful summer, that summer, for the master. The grazing-grounds were too far away from home. His young wife was too busy with her child and household work to come to see him. But she did come at the end of the grazing season. Azor was running ahead of her.

Azor was happy to see her master again. Never before had she been so happy. Leaving the rams to watch the flock she and Negru went hunting day after day. Not only hares, but long-tailed red foxes and silver-tailed 'bustigans,' skunks, porcupines. The hills and woods were full of them, and squirrels and ground-hogs. And below, on the lake, there were flocks of wild geese and ducks. There was plenty of fresh meat for all of them. The master was kept busy drying and curing pelts. Puica remained with her husband until he was ready to return home with the flock even if it was a little earlier than usual, partly because the master wanted to make the journey in slower time, for the lambs were all heavy, fat and soft-footed because of the high grass, and partly because his wife was with him.

He was pleased with the news she had brought him. He should soon be the father of two children. Then he would no longer have to shepherd his own flock. He could hire a man for the work and remain in the village and begin to work up the other end of his wealth – his fields and cattle. The sheep were only the foundation of the wealth of a Cateni gospodar, but not all of it.

Snow-storm followed snow-storm that winter. It was one of those winters of which people usually say, 'There never was and never will be,' and forget what they have said when the next winter comes along. It was a cold and long winter, that winter, nevertheless.

Toward the end of it Azor began to feel again the heaviness of her body. It was like the previous year. But she was no longer scared. She knew. She waited and expected the terrible pain – the tearing, stabbing pain, the burning in her throat, the drying of her tongue. The great thirst held no terrors for her any longer. She knew. There were to be two soft balls of fur clinging to her and whining softly as they rolled blindly over one another to get at her breasts. And when the pain came Azor bore it quietly. And there were three in the litter.

At about the same time the master's wife gave birth to her second male child. And in the great

happiness the master first forgot and then remembered the dog.

'And what do you think, Puica, my wife? Azor has three pups. We shall raise one of them. For the flock grows and grows,' he announced to his wife.

'Take them in. I want to see them.'

Dan Cateni went out but returned a few minutes later with sombre mien.

'What has happened?' asked the alarmed young mother.

'She won't let me near her. She covered them with her body and looked at me as if I were a stranger.'

'She remembers what has happened last year, Puica answered.

'Nonsense,' the young master replied, and proceeded to play with his eldest son. 'Dogs are not supposed to remember. She is a worthless one. If it weren't for you, I know what would happen to her.'

'You wouldn't do that! Would you?' cried Puica frantically. 'You don't understand her. Oh, Dan! Promise you never will.' He promised.

A week later the master had a bitten hand. Nevertheless Azor remained with only one pup. For when a Cateni wanted to do something he did it. Dan Cateni had decided to raise only one pup from that litter, so he was going to raise one only. No living being could dictate to him what

to do. His own will was enough in all matters.

Azor barked and howled and refused food and drink, and slunk away when the master approached her. But she would not keep in the kennel. She followed scents and rushed suddenly here and there, swimming back and forth across the brook that gurgled back of the stables, diving, pawing, scratching, searching for the lost ones and never heeding the cries and yelps of the one alive who crawled around in search of his mother.

'Azor is a bad mother,' Dan decreed. 'She is neglecting her pup.'

'Who knows better than you why she is doing that?' Puica cried. 'You should have left her the pups. If you only knew! If you only knew!'

It was a cry she had given too frequently. It angered Dan to hear it again. 'What is the secret, woman? This is a "*stana*," a sheep farm, not a dog farm. I have decided to raise one pup, so she has to raise only one,' Dan retorted angrily.

The pup died before it was three weeks old. Azor did not notice the limp carcass, made no move when it was taken away. She was still searching for her lost ones when grazing-time came. They could not get her to follow Negru and the flock herded by a strange man. The master was for shooting her immediately, but his wife interfered.

'Who needs useless dogs? Where there are useless dogs there are poor flocks,' he quoted an old proverb.

But Puica begged and said: 'If you only knew!'

'I do know it's a worthless dog, and that you have spoiled her,' he interrupted.

Azor kept at a distance from her master but was closer and closer to Puica. Her hand was a giving one. She had never taken her pups away. And then she needed her. She had to be watched against that brown man with a red fez. His scent was like that of a wolf! Puica would call the dog into the house and feed her while she nursed the baby and cooed to the older tot who roamed about the room holding on to the walls and the chairs or amused himself pulling at the dog's tail. Azor whined when she heard the sound of pursing lips.

Puica patted her on the head. 'I understand, Azor. I understand. But he is master. And he does not know. And I can't tell him, Azor. I can't. I love him so. Do you understand, Azor? Do you?'

Dan was too occupied to pay much attention to the dog. It was a worthless animal tolerated around the house because of the whim of a sentimental woman.

The kindness of the master's wife and the playfulness of the growing Stan brought forgetfulness to the mother-dog. She began to long again for

the days of plenty, of freshly killed strong meat and the joys of hunting; so, when the master set out one day for the mountains to visit his shepherd, Azor followed him without being called.

'Azor! Azor!' Puica called to her dog from the gate. But the dog did not return. She cowed and crouched and wagged her tail at the sound of Puica's voice, but ran after the departing master to the hills, to Negru, to life in the forests.

'Azor! Azor!' the young woman cried. But Azor was running ahead and Dan's loud laughter was heard echoing through the mountains. 'The dog seems to have come to her senses,' he reasoned, glad to have a watch-dog again of the pup he had raised with such care.

'Where is Azor?' Puica asked when her husband returned from the visit.

'She has remained in the mountains with the flock, wife. She is a shepherd-dog and not a lap-dog.'

'You have chained her there,' she accused him.

'Under oath, I tell you, she has refused to follow me back home.' And there were no other words said about the dog.

When the flock returned home, Azor was with it, happy, gay and strong, and more active even than Negru, who was only two years older than she was.

'There is a dog for you,' the shepherd commented to his master. 'Better than any dog I have ever known. Almost like a human being. You can talk to her and she answers you in her own tongue.'

'She is like all Cateni dogs,' Dan answered with proud simplicity, calling Azor near him. The old friendship between the dog and the master was more or less re-established and because of that Puica somehow lost interest in her. Stan, who was now walking about the place on his unsteady legs, renewed his friendship with the dog, almost compelling her to be his playmate.

And again that winter Azor felt the heaviness in her limbs. But now she knew more than the previous winter. Stealthily and slowly she carried at night bits of rags and straw to a sheltered hole deep down in a rock far away across the brook. When the time of the tearing pains approached, she crawled slowly there, covering her tracks in the snow.

In vain did the master search for his dog and call her. She was not to be found. A week later he saw her slinking about the kitchen door, lean and weak on the legs. Yet when he tried to approach her she ran away yelping.

Dan was disgusted with her. 'An unnatural dog, Puica, I tell you. Never heard of such a thing. She has hidden her litter. But I shall

find them and not one of them will live. Then she will understand who is master. That dog has been spoiled by you; by the children.'

But it was easier said than done. Search as he would every nook and corner within a mile, even with the help of Negru, he could find no trace of Azor's lair. Even following her did not bring any results. She would always lead them astray and away from the litter, running alongside the forest and never crossing the ice of the brook within sight of the master or his dog.

By and by when it began to thaw and the pups began to walk about and whine too loudly, Azor searched and discovered a deeper hole in another rock still farther down the forest. She removed her family there at night, out of eyeshot and earshot of the master and his home. And still she came daily to the kitchen door for the meat and the bone of love that Puica and little Stan would throw to her.

Early that spring, on the day when the flock was being made ready for the journey to the mountains, while Dan was counting the sheep and Puica was preparing food in the kitchen, Azor, dripping wet and barking her loudest, came running up to her master.

'To the devil with you,' Dan yelled as he raised his stick, angry that he had forgotten his count because of the interruption.

But the dog did not run away. She came nearer

and tugged and pulled. Even after she was hit she pulled and called and tugged.

Puica came out at the kitchen door. Azor ran to her, urging her to hide, pushing her indoors, barking furiously. Men came out to see the reason for the dog's madness.

'You had better follow her,' an old man advised.

'Let's all follow her,' said several men.

Without stopping Azor threw herself in the brook and swam across it, calling to people to follow her. She had hardly crossed the brook when the report of a gun was heard. And then the men rushed to battle, a hundred strong, within a few moments. At the head of a large band of mounted Tartars Sender was emptying his gun in the direction of the shepherd. His father had been buried that very day. He was chief. Spread in a semi-circle the Tartars were pressing forward cautiously. Volley after volley was exchanged between the two camps. The day wore on with the Tartars nearing the village, standing just in the cover of the bushes across the brook of Dan's farm. Lying with their stomachs on the ground the shepherds watched with guns in hand the movements of the enemy. Toward evening the shepherds lit several fires. From time to time a desultory shot was fired by one or the other side.

While the other dogs clung to their masters Azor watched at Puica's door. She had even forgotten her pups, now that the mistress was

in danger. Negru was near Dan. Remarking the other dog's absence, Dan thought: 'Azor is a coward. Her scent may be better than that of the other dogs. But she is a coward at heart.'

Toward dawn Azor felt the scent of the enemy approaching. Yet something within her made her repress the desire to bark. She followed the direction from which the scent came. It came from the right angle of the brook, where it was deepest. A soft ripple spread and glided over the water. Azor made a wide circle and entered the cold water. The moon and the sun were dimming one another's light. The smoke from the fires was more pronounced than the flames. Suddenly there was a loud cry which startled the combatants on both sides of the brook. They rushed to the edge, forgetting to shoot at one another. In the middle of the brook dog and man were battling against each other. Mute, hypnotized by the spectacle, the people watched the battle. It lasted only a few minutes. Pawing, snatching with her jaws, the dog was holding the man under water! Then two arms rose from underneath, like masts from a sinking ship. A red blotch circled and spread on the silvery waters. The arms disappeared. The battle was over. As if startled out of a dream the Tartars began to fire at their enemies again. But they had lost their chief, and were bewildered and unnerved.

A few minutes later they rode back faster than they had come.

Azor swam back and, wet as she was, she rushed to her mistress's door. Soon the danger was over and the men returned homeward. They were anxious to see Azor – the dog that had saved the day.

And then a strange thing happened. The dog began to bark as no dog has ever barked. Dan bent over her and tried to pacify her, but she continued barking. Suddenly she ceased howling and rushing up to her mistress she began to pull at her apron, to follow.

The whole village followed them. Now that the danger to the mistress was over, Azor was thinking of her pups. She stopped on the way several times, as if to think the matter over, then she pulled and called again, leading them to the shelter where her litter was hidden. Crouching over them with bared fangs, she waited while they fed themselves at her breast; then she stood away and exposed them to the eyes of her master. There were four of them; big, husky, heavy, brown-furred pups.

Dan and Puica looked at one another understandingly.

'I shall keep all of them. I need them,' Dan finally said.

'Not only because you need them, Dan,' Puica

answered, as she looked sternly at her husband.

'Even if I did not need them,' Dan cried. And it was the first time that anybody had ever seen a Cateni shed tears. Then Puica told to her husband, while all were present, the reason for Sender's attack and how Azor had understood and watched over her.

And as they looked on, Azor, who had understood that there was no danger for her litter, gathered her pups, and driving and shoving them ahead of her as if they were sheep, she led the way back to the kennel near the master's house.

And to-day if anyone asks 'Why has Dan Cateni such large flocks of sheep?' the answer is: 'Look at all the dogs he must feed!' And the brook back of the Cateni farm is called Azor's brook.

The Stranger

CLOSE to the Dobrudjan side of the winding Danube River there lived a tribe of gipsies known throughout Roumania as the Tziganyes from Canara. The men, big, broad, and lithe, wore, in the winter, long coats made of bear-pelts, and short white lambskin jackets over large blue trousers in the summer. And the women wore dresses and shawls and kerchiefs of such gay colours that it was said of them: 'When a Canara woman crosses the road even a funeral cortège looks like a wedding procession.'

And the peasant women would stop churning butter in the tall, narrow wooden pails to talk to them and ask: 'What do you do to make your hair grow so long and be so soft and so glossy?' And touch their arms with the tips of their fingers and question: 'What do you do to make your skin so soft and so smooth?'

And when one wanted to praise a man one had but to say: 'As faithful as a Tzigany from Canara.'

The whole summer to late in the autumn the gipsies roved through the country, selling horses, in the Moldavia, to the blue-eyed peasants along the Sereth River; buying furs from the long-haired, fierce-eyed hunters of the Carpathian Mountains; bartering, trading copper kettles for homespun, sieves for fowl, ear-rings for lambs; charms, necklaces, fiddles, flutes, combs, shawls.

For a waggon of a Canara gipsy held no end of things. One had but to ask something and it was forthcoming.

The whole summer they travelled, but late in the autumn they would cross the Danube in boats and return to their huts and fields, which had been taken care of by the older people who had remained at home. It was the only gipsy tribe that had settled in that way. The feast of the holy Demetrius over, toward the end of the October month, the young people threshed the wheat and oats, pressed the grapes, did the ploughing, sawed wood for the winter stove, repaired the cattle-sheds; so that the Christmas snow-storm should find them ready and the freezing of the Danube should hold no terrors for them. In the Dobrudja one had to expect to spend at least four months indoors, with plenty of food and wood-fire, while the wolves howled and sniffed at the doors and windows. In all there were about a hundred straw-thatched huts, with perhaps six hundred souls in them. There was no regularity in the building of these huts. Some stood with doors to the east and others with doors to the west; and the houses themselves were built helter-skelter.

A happy and contented tribe, the gipsies of Canara. Their chief was a wise old man. Solni was his name. And so old was he, people said even death respected him, for he was older than death.

One day, early in the spring, Solni's youngest

son, Naye, his pride, for he was handsomer and stronger than any of the tribe – this youngest son, having returned from a day's ride to Kara Murat, a Tartar inland marsh village, sat down at the feet of his father and said: 'It is of the woman I love I want to speak to my father.'

Solni stroked his long grey beard that reached to his belt; then he answered: 'When you shall return from your summer travels I shall be no more, my son. The hut is yours then. You will be *barossan* (chief). Whose daughter is she?'

'The daughter of Selim of Kara Murat, Father. And this hut shall be inhabited by another of your sons, for I shall build a hut in Kara Murat.'

After a long silence the old gipsy chief said: 'Wait until the hut is yours before you begin building another. Wait until the chieftainship is yours before you abandon it. Then only will you be able to weigh your love. And if what you have is lighter than what you desire, go. Be happy.'

When Naye returned home that autumn his waggon was heavy with things of silk and copper and silver he had bought for Para, Selim's daughter. The hut was his. So was the chieftainship. He refused both in favour of his older brother. And the gipsies chanted the whole night long before Naye left: 'Happy he who loves so well he is willing to estrange himself, to leave a crown and accept a chain.'

Twelve of the best horses and four of the strong-

est oxen Naye drove ahead to Kara Murat and into Selim's shed. And having spread the silks and the copper on the mud floor of Selim's round hut, he said: 'All this is my share of my tribe's wealth. It is mine now.'

Selim, who liked the young gipsy, looked at the things before him.

'More than that has been offered me for Para, but I have made promise to you and I have had speech with her. She loves you. Yet – you are a stranger here. Your ways are not our ways. Your people are rovers. Mine have been here since the beginning of time; before the Turks had been here and long before the *ghiaours* had claimed this land as theirs. If you take Para for wife you must remain here among us. Half of what you brought I give back to you. Build a hut. There is plenty of land, become one of us; and you can trade within a day's journey.'

'What I brought here,' Naye answered, 'is not one-tenth of what I have abandoned because of my love for Para; my father's hut and the chieftainship of my tribe. And now I become one of your people and will do as you say.'

The following day Naye went to Ishmet, the brickmaker, and bought the flat mud bricks for the building of a hut; for a man must first have a home before a wife is given to him in marriage. While he was chopping straw to mix with the cementing clay soil Para came to see him work.

It was the custom of the village. She had to pay him a visit there daily.

'Build a large hut, Naye,' she advised.

'I shall make it large enough,' the young Tzigany answered with a twinkle in his eye. 'It shall be the largest of the village.'

Para's cheek flushed and her eyelids drooped when he gazed at her.

She was a beautiful girl. Not more beautiful, true, than any of twenty of Naye's own tribe. But the gaze of a man who loves makes a woman beautiful; makes her skin radiate warm colour. Loving eyes upon a woman do what the dew does to a flower. Only loved women are beautiful. Woman ages only when she is no longer loved.

After a few minutes of thought Para spoke again. Her voice was heavy with emotion.

'Don't make it too large, Naye. Don't make it the largest of the village.'

'Why?' Naye inquired, dropping the short, heavy knife upon the tree-trunk that served as a chopping-block.

'If you were born one of ours it would not matter. As it is, they will say, "Why should he, a stranger, shame us by building the largest hut?" So I ask you to make it not larger than my father's.'

'There is wisdom in what you say,' Naye answered sadly. 'If I were to make it small they would say, "Why should he shame us by building a small hut in our village?"'

'But we can make it beautiful inside; as beautiful as we want, Allah be praised,' Para rejoined.

'That we will do, Para,' said Naye, resuming his work, 'for when the hut is ready and we are married I shall think of nothing else than making our home beautiful.'

While the two young people spoke Para's two companions stood at a distance. But they strained their ears to hear every word. In gay burnouses and large yellow pantaloons, while Para wore green clothes, those two companions were to be with her steadily to the day of marriage. It was their duty never to allow the bride out of their eyes.

Para and Naye had tried hard to outwit them, but the vigilance of the girls was heightened by the fact that the groom was a gipsy. He was not to be permitted to think that a Tartar was less than he was. The pride of the race was involved.

Usually the male youth of the village helped the groom to outwit the bride's companions, and there was great sport until the wedding-day. But no one was willing to help Naye. Para herself, knowing how clever her lover was, had told him not to try too hard; not to lower the pride of her people by outwitting them.

Before the first snow had fallen the top bricks of the wall had been set and the places for the roof-beams were scooped out. Then the whole village became busy. Seated around huge kettles

in which boiled *pilau*, sweetened with honey and spiced with cinnamon, the women were pleating the straw to thatch the roof with. And while the women worked, the men were listening to the stories told by the blind *Kiril*, Osman, who had put out the light of his eyes because of a vow he had made on his return from seeing the glories of Mecca.

When all was ready, the night before the roof was raised upon the hut, Naye was shut in alone in one hut while Para was being guarded in another.

Then all the unmarried men, dressed in their best, with copper-studded pistols in yellow sashes and white turbans over red fezes, with long yataghans glistening bluish light in the glare of the red flames, astride the best horses, passed separately Para's window and asked: 'It is the night before the roof is set upon the hut. If I were to ask thee now whether thou preferest me under that roof, what would thine answer be, Para, daughter of Selim?'

'Not thee,' Para answered without tremor, calling out his name. Then, as the man rode away and the others were laughing, the second and the third and the tenth passed by the window, each one asking the same question, each one receiving the same answer.

Then the maidens, dressed in their best, preceded by flaming torches and tambourine-players, passed

in front of the window behind which Naye was standing; and, dancing and singing, each in her turn asked: 'If I were to ask thee whether thou preferest me under that roof, what would thine answer be, Naye, son of Solni?'

'Not thee,' Naye answered, 'though thou art lovely'; and they laughed and enjoyed themselves.

After the last of the maidens had asked the same question Para was brought before Naye's window. Everybody listened.

'Is the hut then built for me?'

'For thee.'

Then they all shouted, 'The hut was built for Para, Selim's daughter,' and the men fired their pistols in the air. It was an old custom of the Tartars of Kara Murat, so that it should be known by all that the choice of the young people is a voluntary one. Bride and groom were allowed to sit together for the first time while the *bayadères* danced and the men sang, accompanying themselves on the little skin-drums that rested on the rugs upon which they squatted. They were as good as married after that ceremony.

At sunrise, after prayers, the roof was set by the villagers while Naye and Para looked on. They were not allowed to help, neither were they permitted to speak to one another or answer questions put by others. Another Kara Murat custom and one affording unending little pleasures. For when they answered they were pun-

ished according to the whim of the man or woman who had succeeded in getting them off guard.

After the wedding Naye brought forth, from a secret bottom in his tent-waggon, a number of rugs and carpets he had held back from Para's father; and in the days that followed he surprised his Tartar wife constantly with a new thing which he had kept secreted. When Selim and his friends paid the first visit on a Friday, after prayers, to the young couple's home, they were taken aback by the number of gay silks hung upon the walls and the rugs spread everywhere. And Naye had hung new golden coin necklaces on Para's neck and given her new ear-rings; and kettles and pans made of hammered copper and brass were nailed all about the oven, catching and reflecting the faces and the flames and the dancing lights of the sheening silks on the divans.

It was a gay hut, the gayest of all the village. The outside was no different from any other; but the gipsy loved colour and light; loved his hut with the instinct of a bird feathering his nest. He had painted with blue and red the inside of the lone window, and with yellow and green and white the door; and there were sheens and colours on the beams of the ceilings and the posts of the walls.

Selim was proud; it was his daughter's hut. He had driven a good bargain. Though the gipsy had kept many a thing from him, it was as it

should be. He was a good trader, Naye. And he was the husband of his daughter.

Early the following spring there arrived at Kara Murat a gang of Roumanian workmen followed by a number of low-wheeled carts heavy with machinery. A valuable limestone quarry had been discovered not more than a mile from the Tartar village, and the exploitation of it began then and there. Without haste the workmen began to build sheds and barracks for themselves and the power-machines.

Apathetically, the Tartars looked on from a distance, stood in their doors, and looked and cursed. They did not understand what was going on, except that the century-old peace had been disturbed. The *ghiaours* were bringing devilry to their doors. They looked on with dread at a new village springing up under their very noses.

Naye went over, to see what was intended. While the Tartars of Kara Murat closed their ears and cursed when the log-fired engine's whistle emitted the first screech, Naye's eyes glistened with pleasure and delight. It was like music to his ears. It was life – active, feverish.

There were over a hundred workmen; they would need many things. He was a trader. He offered to furnish them with fresh meat and milk and honey, and sell them horses and carts. In-

deed, the very first day he sold them several young lambs and many other things.

'We shall get rich, Para,' he told his wife, kissing her when he returned to his roof. 'And I shall make this hut the most beautiful in the world.'

Para was very happy. 'I know you will, Naye; I know you will.'

The whole day long the engine turned the screeching saw that tore into the soft limestone, cutting it into square slabs. Heavy ox-carts, driven by young boys with long sticks in their hands, carried them away. The workmen were loud-voiced, and as the quarry went deeper and deeper the echo became stronger and stronger, so that every word, every hammer-blow resounded, re-echoed, and travelled over the hills and dales. A soft white powder settled over everything within miles.

To Naye the activity of the quarry was like life renewed. The long, silent winter had been very monotonous to him. In his tribe the winter had been gay with dances and fights. The Tartars of Kara Murat were pious Mussulmans and a very quiet people. But trade was now brisk. The workmen were noisy, singing and dancing at every occasion, laughing loudly at the slightest provocation. Some of the men had fiddles, others flutes, and many had accordions, which they played expertly.

Naye was so absorbed he did not notice how

Para's people looked askance at him when they saw him go to or come from the *ghiaours'* camp. He was too happy to notice anything. He even smiled when they asked more than a reasonable price for the honey and the lambs he bought from them for his customers. 'Let them also feel the sudden prosperity,' he said when Para protested against the high price of eggs.

As the spring advanced more workmen arrived at the quarry. Some brought their families and proceeded to build little homes. Neat square green-roofed houses made of limestone, which they painted white, with blue lines about the doors and windows. Naye had to go afar from Kara Murat to get provisions for them. His own people did not have enough to sell. Never before had the Tartars seen so much gold. Never before had they received such prices for their goods. Yet they resented the intrusion of the *ghiaours* on their marshes; resented the devil that swallowed fire, spat smoke and steam, and shrieked and screamed; resented the white powder that found its way into every corner, in the food and even in the teeth. Even the children's curiosity was not stronger than their hatred for the men and the things that had disturbed their peace. And when the Roumanian workmen passed Kara Murat on Sunday, eager to see the village and to meet their neighbours, the doors were closed, the people sullen.

Only Naye and Para were happy. From every trip he brought new things. As a bird feathering a nest carries pieces of straw in its beak, he carried on every trip homeward silver and gold and copper things with which to beautify his hut. The two were indeed bent on making it the most beautiful in the world.

Then one Monday morning when the mechanic came to start the steam-engine he found the shed door broken, the transmission-belts cut to shreds, and the entire machinery out of commission. A fez found on the ground indicated that the culprit was one from the Tartar village.

When Naye, wondering why he had not heard the shrill morning work-whistle, had walked over to the quarry, he found out what had happened. He became so furious he was uncontrollable. Quite apart from the profit he made he liked the noise about the quarry. The gang of workmen, too, were uncontrollable in their wrath. They recalled the sullenness of the heathen Tartars, who, after all, were only tolerated there, it being the Dobrudja, Roumanian territory. The damage done the engine meant loss of time, of wages. Naye shook his fist at every Tartar he met that day. He was angry. He was mad with anger.

That very afternoon two mechanics arrived from Sulina, and with them were a half-dozen gendarmes, carbines on their shoulders, headed by a gold-bespangled officer,

While the engine was being repaired a tent was raised and the Roumanian flag was unfurled. Seating himself behind a table also covered with the red, yellow, and blue flag, the officer opened court. Naye, who spoke the Tartar tongue, was asked to act as interpreter. The whole male population of Kara Murat, young and old, was herded together. One by one they were brought before the officer and asked whether they knew who had perpetrated the crime. The answer was as expected. No one knew.

The officer, speaking through Naye to the assembled crowd, then said that he gave them till Thursday to deliver the culprit; after which he would proceed to inflict justice as he saw fit. And he warned that he was going to be very severe, while if the culprit was delivered he would be very lenient with him.

The Tartars departed sullenly to their huts. Late in the night the whistle of the engine shrieked triumphantly. The machine had been repaired. Naye and Para were happy to hear the piercing noise. He did not feel as his wife's people felt; he did not feel with them. He rose from his couch and went to see the engine work. He even helped with the stretching of the new belt and worked with the mechanics the whole night long to help put the engine into shape. He did not notice, early the following morning, that his neighbours did not answer his greetings,

On the third day the officer assembled the Tartars of Kara Murat before his hut and told them that one-twentieth of their huts were to be burned down to the ground that same evening unless the guilty ones were given up. The Tartars returned to their huts. No one knew whose house was to be burned. Some of the people emptied their huts of all the belongings to save something from the impending disaster. Others merely shut themselves in and waited for the fatal hour.

An hour before sunset a hundred gendarmes in glittering uniforms, with drawn swords and riding spirited horses, drew up in a circle around the village. Just at the hour of prayer the bugle was blown. For the last time the officer asked of the assembled populace that the guilty ones be delivered to the law. There being no answer, five huts were chosen at random, were thoroughly soaked in kerosene, and set on fire while the soldiers kept vigil to see that this punishment was carried out fully.

At first the fires burned brightly, then they settled down to a slow smouldering and a crackling and sizzling. Para and Naye, holding on to one another, had trembled in fear lest their hut should be one of the five.

But the rising flames, instead of having the desired effect, only fanned more active hatred in the hearts of the Tartars against the intruders. All the old Asiatic lust for destruction, all that

had been asleep since the days of Tamerlane, awoke at the sight of the leaping flames and dense clouds of smoke. The naked swords of the gendarmes, instead of scaring them into submission, aroused them, stirred them, made them think of their own yataghans that hung over the fireplaces in every hut. But there were too many gendarmes. Caution was necessary.

For a full week after that night there was no quiet. The watch around the engine-room had been doubled, and it was thought that the punishment had been the very thing. And even Naye thought so, and answered the question of the officer as to what was said by the Tartars:

'They don't say anything. They do not know who did it. It's a great loss: five huts.'

But the younger element of Kara Murat could not withhold their hatred any longer, for on the eighth night after the five houses had been burned two houses of the new Roumanian hamlet were set on fire. Naye was in great despair when he saw the white houses burning in the night. He knew what was to happen. This time there was no question and no delay. The following night ten Tartar houses were burned down by the gendarmes. While the flames were dancing, some of the younger Tartars, unable to control themselves, fascinated by the flames, drew up their horses round the burning huts and rode at top speed round and round about them, shouting and

yelling all the old-time imprecations against the *ghiaours*.

For more than a month afterward there was quiet in Kara Murat. As the soldiers remained in the Roumanian settlement Naye had to go afar to get provisions for the two hundred and more people, including the workmen. His wife's people had little to sell, and refused to sell what they had. Such errands frequently took the young gipsy too far away; thus he was frequently compelled to stay away at night. And when he returned he was too busy to have much time for social intercourse with his wife's people, too absorbed to understand their attitude toward himself. The beautifying of the hut was his chief concern. The more coloured rugs and silks he could obtain for it the happier he was, and the more Para loved him.

The Tartars began to look upon him as one of the enemy's camp, for was he not seen with them from early morning to sundown? And when he was away he was always working for them. Some began to say covertly that Selim was responsible for all the misfortunes; that, had he refused to give his daughter in marriage to a gipsy, had he not been so greedy for a few pieces of gold and a few rings, the Roumanians, unable then to find food and fodder, would have departed and abandoned the quarry.

Selim indirectly and Naye directly were the cause of all the misfortunes; the noise and the

gritting stone powder in the pots and in the ears, the nose, and the teeth. All this was muttered silently. Neither Naye nor Para noticed the change of attitude in their neighbours. They were too happy in loving one another, feathering their mud nest with colourful things, to notice the drab, sullen faces about them.

Late one night Naye, who had gone out to see why one of the horses in the shed adjoining the hut was neighing, saw smoke rise from the Roumanian settlement. Two huddled figures were stealthily returning to the Tartar camp. In the clear, sudden light of a tongue of flame leaping in the air against the clouded sky he recognized the bearded faces of the culprits. A terrible anger against them made him want to fly at their throats, but he controlled himself and entered his hut.

'Osman and Kahlil have set fire to a *ghiaour* house,' he told his wife, awakening her from her slumbers. 'There will be trouble with the authorities again. Maybe they will burn the whole village this time.'

'You must not tell the *ghiaours* who did it!' Para clutched at him.

Naye hid his face and sobbed. 'Why do your people do such things?'

She trembled in fear as she listened to the whistle of the engine that had suddenly begun to shriek. The fire was quickly put out. But the following

morning the gendarmes came and arrested the two guilty Tartars. The watchman had seen their faces in the light of the same flame in which Naye had recognized them. Twenty Tartar houses were burned that night. And the Tartars, instead of being humbled, subdued, were only aroused. A dozen of the younger men set upon two gendarmes. There was a scuffle and blood flowed freely.

Half of Kara Murat was already destroyed by that time. For a house in the Roumanian settlement ten Tartar huts were burned. And no one knew until the last minute which of the houses would be destroyed. A few days later the watchman of the engine-shed was found stabbed. Again the gendarmes came. This time they set fire indiscriminately to house after house, driving the people out first at the point of the naked sword.

Naye and Para trembled with fear. They had worked so hard to beautify their hut. It was piled high with green-silk cushions and feathered divans and piles of Damascus and atlas and rugs and foxskins. And the window was painted so brightly and the door so gaily! Their hut was spared! When one of the gendarmes wanted to set fire to it the sergeant interfered: 'Leave this hut. It belongs to Naye, the Tzigany.' Four huts on each side had been burned to the ground.

When Naye opened his door the following morn-

ing what had been a village a few months before was only a mass of ruins. Only a dozen of crooked chimneys, like beaks of crows hiding in straw-stacks, were still in existence. Horses, cows, goats, and fowl of all kinds were running wild about the ground. Sheds, stables, and granaries had been destroyed. The smoke had driven the bees back into the hives, where they ate the honey they had distilled for months.

Naye had been awake the whole night. He had been thinking searchingly. The Tartars were wrong, but the Roumanians were not doing the right thing either. He was first going to speak to his own people, to the people he had adopted as his own. He was going to explain to them that the others were the masters, the rulers; that the country belonged to them; that it was folly to fight against them. They had thousands of soldiers and gendarmes; swords and guns and cannons. Then, when he had succeeded in making that clear to them, he was going to have speech with the authority on the other side, and to him he was going to explain what the Tartars felt. And then they would establish a truce on both sides. The mud huts could be rebuilt rapidly enough. They could use broken slabs of limestone for the purpose, and for the asking.

Before winter half of the village could be restored in a more or less temporary way. People could crowd when necessary. The sheds for the animals

had to be restored. Cattle had to be taken care of. He was willing to house his father-in-law with his two wives. Others could do likewise with their relatives. In a short time they could again be happy. There was trade for all of them. The other settlement, the Roumanian one, was bound to grow. How he loved his hut! Coming home to it was his greatest joy. His people, the Tziganies of Canara, half-settled rovers, loved their huts, and the home-coming had always been great joy.

Coming out of his door, Naye sought out Selim, his father-in-law, and the chief of the tribe.

'I must have speech with our people to-day, my father,' he said as soon as he had seen him. He was excited. Fired by the importance of his self-imposed mission, his voice was masterful.

'You shall have it after sundown. I myself shall call them,' Selim answered, wondering what had come over his son-in-law.

'Good! Call them all in front of my house after sundown, Father.'

Then Naye went quickly to the Roumanian settlement. 'I must see the officer, the captain, the general,' he pleaded with the sentinel guarding the door.

'Not to-day, Tzigany. He is not to be disturbed. Two other officers are inside, and they are talking together. They will raze the whole Tartar village to the ground.'

'Tell him that I must see him; I must, I must,' Naye pleaded.

Then he went among the workmen and spoke to them. 'Because two or more fools were setting fires to a few houses it was not right to destroy a whole village,' he argued.

'Look at the gipsy taking the Tartar side!' they scoffed. But he was so earnest, so persuasive, so eloquent, that some of the older workmen began to say that there was some sense in what the Tzigany spoke. The whole day long he spoke.

He cried with hot tears as he explained the Tartar side, the impending misery of the winter, the death of horses and cows, children in the cold, death and starvation. He spoke to the men who drilled and to the men who manipulated the hand-saws, to the ones who loaded the stones on the ox-pulled carts and to the ones who chopped wood for the steam-engine. At the end of the day, exhausted, feverish, hoarse, he was convinced that he had gained the others in favour of a truce. The most difficult task was accomplished. He returned home.

Entering his hut, he wondered why Para was so nervous!

'Don't worry, dear; whatever comes, they shall not destroy our nest. The whole day I have been among them to prevent the burning of our hut, and I have begged and cried for the others also'; and as he spoke his eyes embraced in a glance all

that his home contained. Para did not answer.

Selim, grown considerably older, curved, bent, as if the woes of the whole world had suddenly descended upon him, unshod himself at his daughter's door, but did not dare enter. Naye waited indoors for a little while, full of buoyant expectancy at first and then wondering why the father of his wife did not appear. He opened the door.

'Why art thou waiting outside, Father?'

Selim replied, not looking at Naye, 'I have called, but they will not come to listen to thee.'

'Why should they refuse to listen to me when I have only good news to give them?' Naye questioned.

'It is because their faith in you, which was never very strong, has weakened even more of late.'

'And why?' Naye asked, standing off so as to bring his full stature to bear upon the old man and his wife.

'It is because you are a stranger, and you see the other people too frequently. It is because my people feel that you are the friend of the others,' Selim answered, and his words dragged as if they had long been imprisoned within him.

'Allah be merciful!' cried Para, as she threw herself into her husband's arms.

Naye disengaged himself from her and pushed her into her father's arms.

'Wait outside, both of you, until you see me again,' he advised. Then he closed the door behind him as he entered his hut. When he was alone he emptied the kerosene-lamp, the only one in Kara Murat, upon the divans, high with cushions of silks of all colours. He tore down all the hangings, curtains of heavy Damascus cloth and rugs from Bokhara and Tientsin, and made piles of them, strewing them upon the divans. His eyes were full of tears, but his face was set with the decision he had so suddenly taken.

A match cracked. He applied the flame to the silken fringe of a divan. When Naye was certain that the fire was well alight he slowly opened the door and faced his wife and her father.

'Man, what have you done?' Selim cried, seeing the bursting flames when Naye came out of the door. The old man wanted to rush inside, to put out the fire. Naye, calm and collected, barred the door.

'Now it will be light enough for me to see the faces of the men I am speaking to. Go call them outside my door. I have paid for the right to speak to them,' Naye answered.

And they came. While the hut burned Naye spoke to the pale faces of the assembled men, who looked up to him like sinners to a saint.

Within the new year a new village was built by the Tartars. When all was restored Naye and his

wife departed to live with his own people at Canara.

In the centre of Kara Murat stands a roofless ruin of a mud hut. It is known as 'The Stranger's Hut.'

Rutka

IN old Dobrudja, the land lying between the Danube and the Black Sea, man and beast, living as they do in close proximity, understand one another better than anywhere else. The cowshed is under the same roof with the home of the master. Cow, horse, dog and man are herded together; are fed at the same time, frequently almost the same food – corn and mush – are warmed by one another's warmth of breath, when the stove wood has given out during the long winter; have the same joys and the same enemies; common beasts of burden of the waste cold plains.

No one could have said that red-bearded old Buzor, the sheep herder, had ever been cruel to his dogs. Indeed, he loved them and cared for them as if they were his own children. His flock of sheep roaming over the plains and on the inclining slope of the low hills bordering the Roumanian side of the Danube was not large enough to warrant keeping more than a few dogs. Yet Buzor always had more dogs than he could afford.

Coming on an early winter morning into the hut in which he kept his dogs, Buzor found a litter of five born to his favourite Roshka. The light-hearted peasant shook his head dolefully as he looked at the five wriggling masses of breathing flesh, tugging at the breasts of their shaggy, sprawling mother. The five little balls of moist

fur were of the same vivid red hue as their mother.

'Five more dogs! Five more! What do I want with five more, Roshka?' old Buzor murmured, patting the dog-mother on her head. Then he closed the door and returned to the low thatched mud hut in which he lived with his wife and only son, Radu, a lad of about fifteen. The household had been expecting Roshka to come in.

'How many?' Radu jumped at his father. Old Buzor passed his big hands over his curling, lying lips under his moustache, averted his face from the eager, inquiring eyes of his son, and replied, 'Two.'

'Can't I see them?' Radu asked, hastily throwing the big lambskin-lined coat over his shoulders.

'Not until to-morrow, Radu. It is not good to look at them now. It is not lucky for the mother. To-morrow, to-morrow.'

Radu threw the coat on the ground to be used as a rug and sat down despondently near the stove, while his father busied himself around the house.

'Come over here, son,' he suddenly called to Radu. 'Turn the handle of the grindstone. All my old ploughshares are dull.'

Radu turned the handle slowly. The screeching and crunching of the stone against the cold iron vibrated in the air. Sparks flew about the beard

of his father and disappeared in the long red hair. Radu's voice, shrill and unsteady, rose above the din to ask, 'What will we call them, those two?'

'You must not think of names before they are at least eight days old. It's unlucky to do that.' And forthwith he began to spin a number of tales of what had happened to dogs who had been given names before they were eight days old. The *strigois*, dog devils, possessed them. They ate the sheep they were raised to guard.

Shaking the snow from his boots and fur cap, a neighbour entered to inquire about Roshka.

'Two, neighbour,' Buzor answered, conscious that his son was watching him.

'*Bogda proste*,' the peasant answered, as he sat down for the *aldemash*, the customary drink of prune wine, served upon such occasions. Then many more shepherds and peasants living in the neighbourhood came in. For they all loved Roshka. She was the best sheep-dog in the neighbourhood, an *ogar*, with wolf blood in her veins.

Long before sundown, several other peasants just dropped in for news of Roshka. When they had drained Buzor's last drop of prune wine, the peasants decided to adjourn to the neighbouring inn. When they had gone, Radu, unable to control himself any longer, stole outside while his mother, sitting in front of the fire, discoursed with herself about the ways of men: 'One, then two, then a dozen. Much they care for Roshka.

They came to drink us out of everything. Not enough left even for a stomach-ache. God, how mean they are!

Slowly and on tiptoes Radu stole into the hut where Roshka was lying. And there, much to his amazement, he counted five and not two little puppies.

'Why did father lie to me?' he muttered. He bent over the mother, and after holding her head to reassure her, he stroked the soft and wet fur of the five wriggling knolls of flesh. Suddenly he heard the snow crunch underneath his father's heavy boots. His father had invited his friends, upon leaving the inn, to come for one look at the litter before departing for their homes.

'I only want two,' Radu heard his father say. 'I have enough dogs as it is. I will give you one, Stephan, and to you one, John. A dog from Roshka's litter is worth its weight in gold. But the fifth must be killed. I will do it now, it does not suffer pain when so small.' The last sentence was uttered as the door was pushed open.

'You will not kill it, you will not kill it,' Radu cried at the old shepherd. 'For God's sake don't kill it.'

'What shall one do to a boy who disobeys his father and goes into the dog hut when he was explicitly told not to?' the old man thundered, breathing hard, his face averted from his son, but with a mocking, good-natured glint in his eyes as

he looked at his friends. Wishing to give his son an excuse, Buzor continued in a softer tone. 'Yet I know he would not disobey without good reason. He is my son. He probably heard old Roshka moan and bark; perhaps she was uncomfortable, and cried out. So he came in to see what was the matter with her. Isn't that so, Radu?'

'No, Tatusha, she did not bark, she did not moan; I could not resist my desire to see her and the little puppies. I was too curious,' Radu explained straightforwardly.

'This boy deserves a whipping,' said one of the peasants.

'No, this boy deserves as good a father as he has,' said the other peasant. 'The *Popa* says, "Filial disobedience is not as great a sin as lying." A human being sometimes disobeys, but lying is of the serpent.'

Radu was not paying any attention to the comment about him.

'I ask you, Tatusha, what will you do with the fifth one?'

Buzor did not reply. He was thinking of the great sin of lying. He had lied to his son. Radu lifted his eager face. His blue irresistible eyes were framed by very dark eyebrows and very long, black, waving hair hanging over his shoulder. He pleaded, 'You are giving one to Stephan, you are giving one to John; give one to me, Father.'

'What can one do with such a son?' the father pleaded with the peasants. 'One day he will ask yet that I serve him the moon on a platter, and I will do it. . . .'

After a moment's silence the father again spoke: 'What will you do with the dog when I give it to you?'

'I will take care of him myself. And in the spring when I take the flock of young sheep down below Chernavoda, I will take him along with me and teach him how to tend sheep. I want to have my own dog; raised and trained by myself only.'

'You shall have him, my son, and may God bless the whole litter,' the mollified father added.

The friends departed. It was getting dark. Father and son returned to the house for woollen rags to cover the litter.

'It is not a litter of two, but five that Roshka has given us, wife,' the old man announced to the woman, who was seated now at the spinning wheel.

'Five!' the old woman exclaimed as she rose to her feet. 'Heavens! Haven't we enough dogs now? One will soon come to think that we raise dogs instead of sheep.'

'Hush, and say *bogda proste*, woman. For we want them all to live. When dogs die, sheep die also. I keep two. Stephan takes one, John takes one, and Radu here has begged for one all to

himself. It is the dowry we are giving him,' the father continued, patting his son affectionately on the shoulder. 'A dog with which to keep the thieving Tartars and the wolves away.'

'*Bogda proste!*' the woman said, as father and son went out to cover the dogs for the night. When they returned they all sat down on the straw-matted floor around a low table and began slowly to munch the grilled strip of mutton which they ate with cold corn mush dished out upon clean round wooden boards set before them.

Six weeks later, the two neighbours took away their pups. Buzor marked his own two. And then Radu took his and called him Rutka; Rutka, because he was the reddest of the batch. His fur, too, was much more glossy and longer than that of the others.

As the pup grew older, fondled and cared for by the boy, he also became a good deal livelier than the rest. Radu fed him out of his own plate and warmed him with his own body in the cold nights.

Four months later the snow had melted on the green of the slope. In the latter half of May, when Rutka was seven months old, Radu was sent to graze the young sheep. They were over a hundred in number. It was the boy's first season alone as a shepherd. Rutka was almost twice the size of his litter brothers. With difficulty, Radu had persuaded his father to allow

him to take only Rutka with him to the grazing hills.

'My staff, my gun, and Rutka will be enough. He already barks like a grown-up dog and will keep the wolves at a distance,' he had pleaded. 'And he has inherited Roshka's best points.'

Passing out from the cluster of houses around the green-roofed church, into the open plains, to cover the ten miles to the grazing ground, the young dog would run ahead and turn about to watch his master's eyes and read from them his will. Rutka's instinct told him that from then on something definite would be desired of him; and he was anxious to please. The four old rams that went along with the flock knew their business well. They crowded the stupid young bleating sheep and pushed them ahead.

'This way, that way, Rutka,' coached Radu, as he pointed with his staff to the right and to the left. The dog looked at the staff and the master and rose on his hind legs and barked, but did not understand. It was only after they had gone a pace that Rutka grasped what was wanted of him. Forthwith he circled around and around as the flock plodded on.

Rutka was terribly afraid of the old curved-horn rams who turned their vicious heads toward him every time he came too near. Yet after Radu had whistled to him and pointed to him again and again, he threw his body against one of the

rams walking on the outside. The bearded old fellow, angered, butted and turned around to gore the insolent young pup. Never before had a dog done that to him. Instantly, he abandoned his flock and began to run after the dog, his long horns aimed for Rutka's ribs. Rutka ran panting, his tongue lolling out of his mouth.

Suddenly, and just at the most opportune moment, the staff of the master came between the ram and himself. And, wonder of wonders, his master seized with his hands the dangerous horns and held them fast. The vicious beast was kicking and shaking violently. But the master was not afraid. He held on to the horns until the ram quieted down; then with one shove, he pushed the ram away.

The master stroked the dog's head, gave him water from his own gourd, then bent over and patted him on his head. Rutka whined and complained, begging to be patted. When he had rested a bit, he looked queringly into the blue eyes above him. The flock was now all over the field, bleating, crying, tearing this way and that way, not knowing where to go or what to do. It was the first time the young sheep had been away from the protecting horns and shaggy pelts of their mothers. They were cold and shivering when not in a compact mass.

'This way,' the master pointed his staff to Rutka, who rose to his feet. And Rutka understood

what was wanted of him. His will returned. His fear disappeared. His legs were steady again as he began to describe a wide circle, shouldering the frightened sheep inward, nipping softly at their legs when they did not hasten to join the herd. Again and again he turned round and round and the circle became smaller and smaller.

Soon the herd was a compact mass again, and Rutka, as he passed his foe, the ram, turned and looked at his master. Was he to avoid him or should he dare him again?

From the movement of his master's head, Rutka understood that he might dare. Quite unconcernedly, he shouldered the old ram in passing. And, wonder of wonders; the ram turned his forequarters into the circle and hid his bearded head, as though he had not seen Rutka at all, but had felt only his power! Triumphantly, Rutka ran to his master and laid himself down at his feet. A good firm hand patted the flat of his head, passing gently over his spine; giving him pleasant, warm shivers that vibrated through the whole frame of his body. That, he felt, was recognition for good work.

Before the sun had set below the hills, his master began to burrow into the ground making a sort of ditch. Rutka watched him work and tried to help shovel the ground with his forefeet.

Radu fastened a roof of tanned lambskins overhead. When the work was accomplished and a

little fire had been built on the knoll upon which the master had been sitting, Rutka and the master encircled the flock in a wide *détour*. They did this several times. One of the sheep had strayed behind the line. The master pointed. Rutka understood that he was not to allow any of the flock to leave that circle. The master understood that he had grasped this and again he patted him upon his head and passed his hand gently over his spine.

The flock was the all-important thing. That finally crystallized itself definitely into the dog's consciousness. He was there to guard the flock. And that night Rutka had his first experience of skulking shadows approaching nearer and nearer the herd. His master was asleep. Rutka barked. The master did not stir. Rutka understood that it devolved upon him to take care of the flock. A strange odour, that which had sometimes made his mother start and bark and run, was wafted toward him now upon the wind.

Furiously, Rutka made a rapid tour around the described circle. At a distance, he saw a shape that seemed to resemble that of his big mother in outline. Yet his instinct warned him that he could not approach her in play; that she was much more dangerous than even the ram he had feared that day.

Facing the monster at a distance and running

toward him, he sensed the intruder was trying to break into the circle. Now that the flock was in danger, the generations of sheep-guarding ancestors asserted their instinct through him.

The huge brown mass came closer and closer. Rutka felt that the rams, no matter how quarrelsome with him, should now be his allies in fighting off the common enemy. But the rams, instead of coming to the fore, crowded back and began to bleat and run. They were of the flock. He was in charge of it. He and his master. His friend.

Rutka saw with horror that the rams were breaking out of the circle behind him. And yet he knew that the greater danger lay with the intruder should he break into the circle of sheep.

And then the marvellous thing happened again. A great noise followed by a piece of fire broke through the night at a terrific speed and that huge brown mass turned, gave one long howl and stretched on his back, his paws clawing the air.

Before Rutka had had time to realize what had happened the master was beside him. Rutka understood that it was the master who had come to his aid in defending the flock.

This time he was unafraid of the rams. They had run away from the ill-smelling foe that he and his master had vanquished. It was the flock of sheep that was of the utmost importance.

The following days Rutka learned a few more very important things. Other shepherds came to

graze their flocks in the neighbourhood. Each flock had its circle and other dogs watching it. At first, Rutka growled, but seeing his master in friendly talk with the men, he fraternized with the other dogs. Rutka learned that none of the sheep of his own flock must break into the other flocks.

And this, too, he learned – that against the scent of the wolf he and the other dogs had to act in common; that the wolf must not be allowed near any of the other flocks.

When the frost had bitten the grass, the sheep who had grown to full size by this time, followed by the master and himself, were led homeward.

Snow covered the fields again. As time passed, Rutka loved his master more and more, and followed him everywhere.

When the snow on the ground was deep over the ankles, Rutka saw his master walk around with one of the other creatures of human kind. Her voice was softer even than that of his master. And she always gave Rutka a piece of sugar when she saw him. And Rutka grew to love her.

In the evening, if his master did not go to the fence where the other creature waited, he would tug and pull, calling, running ahead. By the time his master would reach the trysting-place where the girl was waiting, the dog would be on his haunches, waiting there, or running about,

prancing, dancing, and emitting short little yelps. And when his master entered the house, Rutka would sit outside the door and watch lest any evil befall them.

And around that house, guarding the sheep of the master of the girl, was a dog. Mussa was her name. Her fur was soft and she was warm. She came near him and they played together.

Leana, Radu's sweetheart, was the fairest maiden of the village. Her father, Constantine, was a breeder of horses. He and Buzor, Radu's father, had been bosom friends for many long years. The two men were indeed happy that their children should love each other, and it was understood that the wedding was to be about Christmas of the following year.

Old Constantine had lost an arm in a fight with Tartars who had stolen some of his horses. He had no sons to avenge him. He had great hopes in Radu. 'He will avenge me,' he would frequently say to his daughter. 'He is strong and brave.' Old Constantine seemed to live for nothing else than to be avenged; that at least one Tartar should be killed for his lost arm, for his lost horses.

The pockmarked Tartars from Baragan, across the border-line, like the wolves, were the enemies of men.

As the winter continued, Rutka gained more

and more knowledge. He partook in the repelling of a Tartar raid, a bear hunt, and learned all about the baffling ways of the wily fox. He was now of full-grown stature. Stronger, bigger than any dog in the neighbourhood.

Then one day Rutka began to feel warmer. underneath his fur. The white snow began to dwindle and melt into mud. Gradually, as it grew warmer, the earth uncovered itself, revealing little patches of green here and there. Rutka was happy again. Mussa, too, regained her spirits and they played together once more. His instinct told him that the sheep were to leave soon the enclosure behind which they had been kept all winter.

And true enough, soon, when it was warmer than it had been for a long time, the flock was let out of the enclosure.

Rutka was proud to show there was no need to tell him what to do now. He had grown friendly with the rams and was no longer afraid of them.

Rutka lazily turned around the flock, showing the way toward the grazing ground. Mussa was walking near him. His master walked near Leana. Old Buzor and Constantine were far behind. At the end of the village the flock was ordered to halt. Radu and Leana embraced and kissed one another. Then Constantine put his

two arms around Radu. 'Keep the flock intact, my son. And remember what I have told you about the Tartars. Never will a daughter of mine marry a man who is not their enemy. They are wolves in human disguise.'

Radu was a strange being that summer. At sixteen he was desperately in love, madly yearning for his beloved when away from her. He felt very little in common with the other shepherds. Their ribald tales annoyed him.

There was, after all, very little to do when out on the grazing plain with the sheep. Once the novelty was gone, it was just one dreary idle day after another. The wolves were kept away by the concerted action of the dogs of all the flocks.

By the end of the second season of his life, Rutka had acquired a definite feeling that his master was superior to men and to all things.

It began to be cold at night. Rutka's instinct told him that they were soon to return to the village; that he was soon to be near Mussa again. And one day his master packed the sheepskin upon which he had slept the whole summer and slung the pack across his shoulder. Rutka understood. He communicated his master's wishes to the rams. Within a few minutes, the sheep were once more a compact square mass of moving fleece.

The masters of the other flocks and the other

dogs followed Radu's example. The men knelt down and prayed and crossed themselves. Then each flock departed in the direction from which they had arrived in the spring.

Rutka and his master walked on slowly for a little while when suddenly there appeared from behind the trees of a distant forest men much darker than his master and the other men tending the flocks; men the kind of which he had never seen; of a different odour. They were riding swift, small horses, yelling strange words at the top of their shrill voices. Rutka crowded the sheep together. He felt that those dark men on horseback were common enemies—like the wolf. Only they could also throw fire from the sticks they carried, just like his master and his friends.

And then a terrible thing happened. They rode round and round the flock and threw the fire from their sticks and scared the flock. The fire reached some of the sheep and killed them. Such a crime against the flock incensed the dog.

He looked at his master who, after several shots into the invaders, had thrown away the stick. He expected his master to put them to flight, to grapple with them, with all of them. He himself was not afraid. He jumped at one of the horses and began to bite at his throat, all his own wolfish blood coming to the fore. A piece of fire struck his leg. A terrible pain shot through his

frame. Howling, limping, he ran toward his master.

But his master lay stretched on the ground before him. He tore at him, begged him to stand up and fight, but the master did not move.

The dark wolves on horseback bound the feet of many sheep, slung them across their saddles, and departed. Forgetting his pain, Rutka began to tug and bite the legs of his prostrate master, urging him to get up; sheep belonging to the flock were taken away! The flock! The flock! The flock for which they were responsible was being desecrated. The master did not stir, did not take the flock back, did not destroy the enemy. The pain he suffered from the burn in his leg did not hurt Rutka as much as the disappointment in his master; as his master's defection to the flock – the inviolable flock.

With the wound in his chest, Radu, followed by the bleeding, limping Rutka, dragged himself home late that night; then he became unconscious. His mother cried. His father cursed. The villagers came. The thieving Tartars from across the border-line were again at their dastardly work. It had happened before. They would sneak across the border, steal sheep and return to their homes.

For a full month Radu's life hung in the balance. And, during that week, while his blood coursed feverishly through his veins, he was

delirious. He called for Leana. He fought through the battle with the Tartars every hour of the day and night.

'Like a black wind they come. God! Only three more bullets in my gun! Rutka! At them! Rutka! At them! The sheep are killed. What will Leana's father say? Old Constantine! Like a black wind they come. One, a thousand. Leana, Leana!'

For a full month his brain wandered. He called for Leana. Yet — not once did she come. Old Buzor first, then the priest had gone and begged Constantine, Leana's father, to allow his daughter near the sick-bed. But the horse-breeder refused.

'Tartars took sheep from his flock. Not one Tartar did he kill. No daughter of mine will ever have anything to do with such a man — dead or alive.'

Radu's youth carried him through the danger. Though the bullet had remained inside him, the young tissue formed a pocket around it. 'Where is Leana?' were the first words he asked when the fever had abated. 'She will come,' the father soothed. But a few days later Radu had to be told the truth. 'Her father won't let her come.'

Radu called for Rutka. But they could not get him to come near his young master. It was not the master's illness that affected him so, but it had penetrated his slowly groping intelligence

that his master was not all he had thought him to be.

At once Radu understood what had come between him and his dog. Rutka cringed and whined and turned on his back, but all the time he kept at a distance.

'That dog of yours is a traitor,' old Buzor said to his son.

But Radu understood better. Brooding over it, he began to realize how much the friendship of the dog meant to him. What cared he for people, for anybody, if he had not the friendship, the confidence of his dog? Nothing counted against that. Even the loss of Leana . . . and he determined to win that confidence back. . . .

Before the snow had melted Radu had made his plans to overpower the Tartar village on the other side of the border-line. The older people of the village opposed the plan. Kengizes were a savage and cruel lot. But Radu, the silent son of Buzor, was now like fire, and his words like honey and sharp steel.

The priest called the men to the church to talk matters over. He pointed out that in former years also, Tartars had stolen sheep, yet no one had dared to go into the enemy's camp for revenge or to recover the losses. It seemed for a moment that the priest's word was final.

But Radu, whom they had known to be so quiet,

rose and said: 'Are we to work all our lives and raise sheep so that the Tartars shall take them when they are full grown? Has the Lord ordained that we be the slaves of the Tartars and furnish them meats for their wedding feasts, and wool for their clothing and beds? Is it the Lord's desire that good Christians be slaves to heathens? Speak, *Popa!*'

That hour, right from the church, the fifty and more young men from the neighbourhood, headed by Radu, on horseback, all with guns slung across their shoulders, rode out toward the Tartar village. Rutka saw his master ride away. He followed at a distance. The wind brought the scent of the black desecrators of the flocks, yet his master rode against the wind.

For several hours the group rode in a solid mass. Then, after fording a river, they all sat down to decide upon definite plans of action. In the dim light of a burning fire, Rutka saw his master standing and talking, while the others listened. Rutka sensed the return of power in the beloved man's voice.

Stealthily and by devious ways, the young shepherds surrounded the cluster of huts of the Tartar village at dawn the following morning. In the mud huts the Tartars were sound asleep. Even the barking of the dogs did not awake them. The screech of an owl was the signal for readiness

of Radu's men. At first one, then another, then ten, twenty, fifty men screeched. It was as if the whole world had suddenly started screeching like owls. Then galloping around and around the huts, the shepherds fired their guns into the houses.

Still heavy with sleep, the Tartars poked their heads out of the huts. The attackers were ready and they were good marksmen. The thatched straw roofs began to smoke. The Tartars, now fully awake, began to defend themselves.

'Shoot into the straw of the roofs,' Radu ordered to his men as a bullet whistled past his head. Then as he rode around he saw standing in a door the very man who had laid him low a few months before. With a wild cry Radu leapt at him from the saddle and sunk his hands into the black devil's throat.

The impact bore the man to the ground. Without letting go of the man's throat Radu rolled with him in the mud while the shots from both sides were whistling overhead. Neither the Tartars nor Radu's men dared to use their weapons on the grappling, rolling piece of mud. And when it remained still, and one of the men rose to his feet, neither side knew who was the victor until Radu's voice was heard again.

The battle went on for an hour. Then when half of the thatched roofs were burning, the fire on the other side ceased suddenly and an old

man appeared at a door with a white flag in his hand.

'Stop firing,' Radu ordered his men.

The old man approached the shepherd.

'Our huts are burning. What are your conditions?'

'That you give us all your firearms and swords and that you return the number of sheep you have stolen from us,' Radu answered.

The huts were burning. Women were screaming. Children were crying. The cattle and the sheep bleated.

'You are the masters,' the man said.

In less than a half-hour there was not a firearm in the Tartar village. Not a firearm and not a sword. The shepherds tied them up in bundles and hung them on the back of their saddles.

The low corrals holding the sheep were then broken open and four sheep were tied and slung across each saddle. Radu's men shouted and shot their guns into the air, over-exuberant at their victory.

From afar, Rutka had watched his master. When he realized that they were again before the enemy, and that his master was not afraid of the dark men who had thrown fire into his foot and taken sheep from his flock, he took heart again. He saw his master throw himself upon one of these dark men and roll with him in the mud

until the other lay still. His confidence in his master was restored.

Late that afternoon, the triumphant youths, shouting, singing, with only one wounded man, reached their own village. There was great merriment, and a feast, and there was dancing and music.

Radu was hailed as the one who was responsible for the victory. It was he who had carried it out to a successful finish. His father cried. His mother cried.

'Radu, Radu, Buzor's son! The Hero, the fearless one!' they all shouted as they dragged him into the inn. 'He battled with the Tartars to redeem our honour.'

Radu turned and looked around. At the entrance stood Rutka, his head turned towards his master, waiting.

'It was to redeem myself in his eyes that I have led you to battle with the Tartars!' he called out.

'Rutka!' he cried. Instantly Rutka was at his feet, crouching and hugging them as he had not done in all the months since the Tartars had stolen the sheep.

'Ask whatever is mine, and it is yours,' Constantine, Leana's father, begged.

'All I want is that you give Mussa her freedom.'

'Is that all?' Constantine asked, pale, trembling as with ague.

'Radul' cried Leana, falling into the boy's arms. Radu lifted her head and looked into her eyes. 'Like Mussa he had chained you, I understand,' he told her as he put out both his hands to Constantine.

'They shall not touch our flock again, Rutka, I swear they shall not,' Radu assured his dog.

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- ¶ A second volume of essays personally chosen by Sir Edmund Gosse from the wide field of his literary work. One is delighted with the width of his appreciation which enables him to write with equal charm on *Wycherley* and on *How to Read the Bible*.

82. ON THE EVE

by Ivan Turgenev. Translated by Constance Garnett

- ¶ In his characters is something of the width and depth which so astounds us in the creations of Shakespeare. *On the Eve* is a quiet work, yet over which the growing consciousness of coming events casts its heavy shadow. Turgenev, even as he sketched the ripening love of a young girl, has made us feel the dawning aspirations of a nation.

83. FATHERS AND CHILDREN

by Ivan Turgenev. Translated by Constance Garnett

- ¶ 'As a piece of art *Fathers and Children* is the most powerful of all Turgenev's works. The figure of Bazarov is not only the political centre of the book, but a figure in which the eternal tragedy of man's impotence and insignificance is realized in scenes of a most ironical human drama.' *Edward Garnett*

84. SMOKE

by Ivan Turgenev. Translated by Constance Garnett

- ¶ In this novel Turgenev sees and reflects, even in the shifting phases of political life, that which is universal in human nature. His work is compassionate, beautiful, unique; in the sight of his fellow-craftsmen always marvellous and often perfect.

85. PORGY. A Tale

by du Bose Heyward

- ¶ This fascinating book gives a vivid and intimate insight into the lives of a group of American negroes, from whom Porgy stands out, rich in humour and tragedy. The author's description of a hurricane is reminiscent in its power.

86. FRANCE AND THE FRENCH

by Sisley Huddleston

- § 'There has been nothing of its kind published since the War. His book is a repository of facts marshalled with judgment; as such it should assist in clearing away a whole maze of misconceptions and prejudices, and serve as a sort of pocket encyclopædia of modern France.' *Times Literary Supplement*

88. CLOUD CUCKOO LAND. A Novel of Sparta

by Naomi Mitchison

- § 'Rich and frank in passions, and rich, too, in the detail which helps to make feigned life seem real.' *Times Literary Supplement*

89. A PRIVATE IN THE GUARDS

by Stephen Graham

- § In his own experiences as a soldier Stephen Graham has conserved the half-forgotten emotions of a nation in arms. Above all he makes us feel the stark brutality and horror of actual war, the valour which is more than valour, and the disciplined endurance which is human and therefore the more terrifying.

90. THUNDER ON THE LEFT

by Christopher Morley

- § 'It is personal to every reader, it will become for every one a reflection of himself. I fancy that here, as always where work is fine and true, the author has created something not as he would but as he must, and is here an interpreter of a world more wonderful than he himself knows.' *Hugh Walpole*

91. THE MOON AND SIXPENCE

by Somerset Maugham

- § A remarkable picture of a genius.
'Mr. Maugham has given us a ruthless and penetrating study in personality with a savage truthfulness of delineation and an icy contempt for the heroic and the sentimental.' *The Times*

92. THE CASUARINA TREE

by W. Somerset Maugham

- ¶ Intensely dramatic stories in which the stain of the East falls deeply on the lives of English men and women. Mr. Maugham remains cruelly aloof from his characters. On passion and its culminating tragedy he looks with unmoved detachment, ringing the changes without comment and yet with little cynicism.

93. A POOR MAN'S HOUSE

by Stephen Reynolds

- ¶ Vivid and intimate pictures of a Devonshire fisherman's life. 'Compact, harmonious, without a single—I won't say false—but uncertain note, true in aim, sentiment and expression, precise and imaginative, never precious, but containing here and there an absolutely priceless phrase. . . .' *Joseph Conrad*

94. WILLIAM BLAKE

by Arthur Symons

- ¶ When Blake spoke the first word of the nineteenth century there was none to hear it; and now that his message has penetrated the world, and is slowly re-making it, few are conscious of the man who first voiced it. This lack of knowledge is remedied in Mr. Symons' work.

95. A LITERARY PILGRIM IN ENGLAND

by Edward Thomas

- ¶ A book about the homes and resorts of English writers, from John Aubrey, Cowper, Gilbert White, Cobbett, Wordsworth, Burns, Borrow and Lamb, to Swinburne, Stevenson, Meredith, W. H. Hudson and H. Belloc. Each chapter is a miniature biography and at the same time a picture of the man and his work and environment.

96. NAPOLEON: THE LAST PHASE

by The Earl of Rosebery

- ¶ Of books and memoirs about Napoleon there is indeed no end, but of the veracious books such as this there are remarkably few. It aims to penetrate the deliberate darkness which surrounds the last act of the Napoleonic drama.

97. THE POCKET BOOK OF POEMS AND
SONGS FOR THE OPEN AIR

Compiled by Edward Thomas

¶ This anthology is meant to please those lovers of poetry and the country who like a book that can always lighten some of their burdens or give wings to their delight, whether in the open air by day, or under the roof at evening ; in it is gathered much of the finest English poetry.

98. SAFETY PINS : ESSAYS

by Christopher Morley

With an Introduction by H. M. TOMLINSON

¶ Very many readers will be glad of the opportunity to meet Mr. Morley in the rôle of the gentle essayist. He is an author who is content to move among his fellows, to note, to reflect, and to write genially and urbanely ; to love words for their sound as well as for their value in expression of thought.

99. THE BLACK SOUL : A Novel

by Liam O'Flaherty

¶ '*The Black Soul* overwhelms one like a storm. . . . Nothing like it has been written by any Irish writer.' "Æ" in *The Irish Statesman*

100. CHRISTINA ALBERTA'S FATHER :

A Novel

by H. G. Wells

¶ 'At first reading the book is utterly beyond criticism ; all the characters are delightfully genuine.' *Spectator*
'Brimming over with Wellsian insight, humour and invention. No one but Mr. Wells could have written the whole book and given it such verve and sparkle.' *Westminster Gazette*

102. THE GRUB STREET NIGHTS
ENTERTAINMENTS

by J. C. Squire

¶ Stories of literary life, told with a breath of fantasy and gaily ironic humour. Each character lives, and is the more lively for its touch of caricature. From *The Man Who Kept a Diary* to *The Man Who Wrote Free Verse*, these tales constitute Mr. Squire's most delightful ventures in fiction ; and the conception of the book itself is unique.

103. ORIENTAL ENCOUNTERS

by Marmaduke Pickthall

- ¶ In *Oriental Encounters*, Mr. Pickthall relives his earlier manhood's discovery of Arabia and sympathetic encounters with the Eastern mind. He is one of the few travellers who really bridges the racial gulf.

105. THE MOTHER : A Novel

by Grazia Deledda

With an introduction by D. H. LAWRENCE

- ¶ An unusual book, both in its story and its setting in a remote Sardinian hill village, half civilized and superstitious. The action of the story takes place so rapidly and the actual drama is so interwoven with the mental conflict, and all so forced by circumstances, that it is almost Greek in its simple and inevitable tragedy.

106. TRAVELLER'S JOY : An Anthology

by W. G. Waters

- ¶ This anthology has been selected for publication in the 'Travellers' Library from among the many collections of verse because of its suitability for the traveller, particularly the summer and autumn traveller, who would like to carry with him some store of literary provender.

107. SHIPMATES : Essays

by Felix Riesenberg

- ¶ A collection of intimate character portraits of men with whom the author has sailed on many voyages. The sequence of studies blends into a fascinating panorama of living characters.

108. THE CRICKET MATCH

by Hugh de Selincourt

- ¶ Through the medium of a cricket match the author endeavours to give a glimpse of life in a Sussex village. First we have a bird's-eye view at dawn of the village nestling under the Downs; then we see the players awaken in all the widely different circumstance of their various lives, pass the morning, assemble on the field, play their game, united for a few hours, as men should be, by a common purpose—and at night disperse.

**109. RARE ADVENTURES AND PAINFULL
PEREGRINATIONS (1582-1645)**

by William Lithgow

Edited, and with an Introduction by B. I. LAWRENCE

- ¶ This is the book of a seventeenth-century Scotchman who walked over the Levant, North Africa and most of Europe, including Spain, where he was tortured by the Inquisition. An unscrupulous man, full of curiosity, his comments are diverting and penetrating, his adventures remarkable.

110. THE END OF A CHAPTER

by Shane Leslie

- ¶ In this, his most famous book, Mr. Shane Leslie has preserved for future generations the essence of the pre-war epoch, its institutions and individuals. He writes of Eton, of the Empire, of Post-Victorianism, of the Politicians. . . . And whatever he touches upon, he brilliantly interprets.

111. SAILING ACROSS EUROPE

by Negley Farson

With an Introduction by FRANK MORLEY

- ¶ A voyage of six months in a ship, its one and only cabin measuring 8 feet by 6 feet, up the Rhine, down the Danube, passing from one to the other by the half-forgotten Ludwig's Canal. To think of and plan such a journey was a fine imaginative effort and to write about it interestingly is no mean accomplishment.

112. MEN, BOOKS AND BIRDS—Letters to a friend
by W. H. Hudson

With Notes, some Letters, and an Introduction by
MORLEY ROBERTS

- ¶ An important collection of letters from the naturalist to his friend, literary executor and fellow-author, Morley Roberts, covering a period of twenty-five years.

113. PLAYS ACTING AND MUSIC

by Arthur Symons

- ¶ This book deals mainly with music and with the various arts of the stage. Mr. Arthur Symons shows how each art has its own laws, its own limits; these it is the business of the critic jealously to distinguish. Yet in the study of art as art, it should be his endeavour to master the universal science of beauty.

114. ITALIAN BACKGROUNDS

by Edith Wharton

- ¶ Mrs. Wharton's perception of beauty and her grace of writing are matters of general acceptance. Her book gives us pictures of mountains and rivers, monks, nuns and saints.

115. FLOWERS AND ELEPHANTS

by Constance Sitwell. With an Introduction by E. M. Forster

- ¶ Mrs. Sitwell has known India well, and has filled her pages with many vivid little pictures, and with sounds and scents. But it is the thread on which her impressions are strung that is so fascinating, a thread so delicate and rare that the slightest clumsiness in definition would snap it.

116. THE MOON OF THE CARIBBEES: and Other Plays of the Sea

by Eugene O'Neill. With an Introduction by St. John Ervine

- ¶ 'Mr. O'Neill is immeasurably the most interesting man of letters that America has produced since the death of Walt Whitman.' *From the Introduction.*

117. BETWEEN EARTH AND SKY. Stories of Gypsies

by Konrad Bercovici. With an Introduction by A. E. Coppard

- ¶ Konrad Bercovici, through his own association with gypsies, together with a magical intuition of their lives, is able to give us some unforgettable pictures of those wanderers who, having no home anywhere, are at home everywhere.

118. THE HOUSE WITH THE GREEN SHUTTERS

by George Douglas. With an Introduction by J. B. Priestley

- ¶ This powerful and moving story of life in a small Scots burgh is one of the grimmest studies of realism in all modern fiction. The author flashes a cold and remorseless searchlight upon the backbitings, jealousies, and intrigues of the townfolk, and his story stands as a classic antidote to the sentimentalism of the kailyard school.

119. FRIDAY NIGHTS

by Edward Garnett

- ¶ Of *Friday Nights* a *Times* reviewer wrote: 'Mr. Garnett is "the critic as artist," sensitive alike to elemental nature and the subtlest human variations. His book sketches for us the possible outlines of a new humanism, a fresh valuation of both life and art.'

120. DIVERSIONS IN SICILY

by Henry Festing Jones

- ¶ Shortly before his sudden and unexpected death, Mr. Festing Jones chose out *Diversions in Sicily* for reprinting in the 'Travellers' Library from among his three books of mainly Sicilian sketches and studies. The publishers hope that the book, in this popular form, will make many new friends. These chapters, as well as any that he wrote, recapture the wisdom, charm, and humour of their author.

121. DAYS IN THE SUN: A Cricketer's Book.

by Neville Cardus ('Cricketer' of the *Manchester Guardian*).

122. COMBED OUT

by F. A. Voigt

- ¶ This account of life in the army in 1917-18 both at home and in France is written with a telling incisiveness. The author does not indulge in an unnecessary word, but packs in just the right details with an intensity of feeling that is infectious.

★

Note

The Travellers' Library is now published as a joint enterprise by Jonathan Cape Ltd. and William Heinemann Ltd. The new volumes announced here to appear during the spring of 1929 include those to be published by both firms. The series as a whole or any title in the series can be ordered through booksellers from either Jonathan Cape or William Heinemann. Booksellers' only care must be not to duplicate their orders.

